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# JESUS
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# JESUS
# ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

AN INTERPRETATION OF ST. MARK'S GOSPEL

BY

WALTER LOWRIE

RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S AMERICAN CHURCH
ROME

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
LONDON • NEW YORK • TORONTO
1929

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON. E.C.4
6 OLD COURT HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA
53 NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY
167 MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO
TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON
210 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO

*Made in Great Britain*

L.I.F.E. College Library
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# PREFACE

THIS work belongs to no familiar category. I call it an 'interpretation' to distinguish it from all commentaries, old or new style; and the picture it presents of Jesus during the one year of his public activity makes no pretence to be a 'life of Christ.'

For twenty-five years I have treasured the hope of writing this book—ever since I first read Albert Schweitzer's *Skizze des Lebens Jesu* (the second part of his book entitled *Das Abendmahl*), which I translated in 1913 under the title of *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (2nd ed., A. & C. Black, 1925). I suspected that a study of the Gospel as a whole would justify Schweitzer's 'thoroughgoing eschatology' as an explanation of the Messianic conduct of Jesus, but would need to be modified to comport with our Lord's teaching. A detailed study of St. Mark's Gospel confirmed my expectation, and I was eager to publish then the interpretation which Schweitzer's thesis had enabled me to reach. I went so far at that time as to write a commentary upon the tenth chapter, substantially as it appears here; and I began then to write in Italian, for the organ of the Italian Christian Student Federation, a brief comment upon the whole Gospel—which hardly got so far as the sixth chapter when the enterprise was suspended by the war. But I was reluctant to write a book upon St. Mark—that is, to register my whole conviction about the picture of Jesus presented in the Gospels—until I might reach my maturest age. I was deterred, moreover, by the presentiment that such a book as I had in mind—*such* a commentary and *such* a life of Jesus—would be coldly welcomed.

Last year I was prompted to take up the task by the reflection that I might soon be *too* 'mature' to do it well—if I were still here to do it at all. And at the same time I was encouraged by the success of Karl Barth's *Epistle to the Romans*. For that is a commentary rather in my style.

And though I have no delusions about the success of my book in my own country, where we have not been deeply enough affected by the war to feel the need of any revision of our easy-going theology, yet a book about Jesus, if it is a true word, can bide its time. This book, if it is not rejected as absurd, must be regarded as a rediscovery (not mine by any means !) of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

All of the ' Lives ' of Jesus we are familiar with, whether they be of ancient or of modern date, appeal chiefly to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, making such use of the Fourth Gospel as they find convenient. This is a favourite method, because it leaves free scope for the imagination. It was always possible to play off one Gospel against another. But that is not any longer possible, if one accepts the estimate of St. Mark in which almost all scholars have concorded for the last fifty years. If St. Mark is our primary and most reliable Gospel, if it is ultimately our only source of information about the course of events in the brief public activity of Jesus, we must allow this Gospel to determine our conception of Gospel history. That hampers the imagination ; but, on the other hand, as may be seen in this book, it forces upon us considerations more novel, more surprising, more fantastic even, than our fantasy has been bold enough to suggest.

It is amazing that no ' Life ' of Jesus has been written from the point of view which historical criticism would seem to require. Schweitzer's *Sketch* is the only prelude to such a work. Loisy is so critical a critic that he has nothing left in his hands with which to construct anything. It seemed to me probable that while I delayed some one else would anticipate me in developing Schweitzer's thesis. His challenge has for twenty-seven years been sounding in men's ears. But no one, so far as I knew, had taken it up. Only after my work was finished did I learn that there was published in London last year *The Historical Life of Christ*, by J. Warschauer, with an introduction by Professor Burkitt, which proposed to do the very thing I was undertaking—except that this author, strangely enough, attributes to St. Mark no more weight than the other Gospels have in his eyes. Our aim was identically the same, so far as words may express it ; and I could wish that it had resulted in so

great a similarity that my own book, being confirmed by Warschauer's, had also been by his rendered superfluous. As it is, I am compelled to exclaim with wonder: 'There, but for the grace of God, is the book I might have written!'

The difference is perhaps due in part to the fact that, much as I make of my obligation to Albert Schweitzer, who has become my friend though I have never seen him, it is not Schweitzer alone that 'gulls me with intelligence.' I am also deeply indebted to the brief commentaries of Julius Wellhausen—in spite of his adroit elimination of the eschatological features of the Gospels. Schweitzer and Wellhausen might be expected to mix like fire and water, and the reader may suppose that he will find here an elegant example of eclecticism—and will be disappointed in that expectation. By Schweitzer's guidance I have been led far beyond the position of my master. Perhaps it is because of the *perfervidum ingenium scottorum* that, from the historical premise that Jesus' outlook was thoroughly eschatological, I have leapt to a theological conclusion and become—not a disciple of the 'Eschatological School,' not merely a student who is interested in eschatology, but a believing eschatologist. Standing there (where there is no standing ground) I am mightily confirmed by Karl Barth and the 'Theology of Crisis'—more particularly by Gogarten—by Dostoyewski also, by Kierkegaard, by Solovieff, and by every modern voice which proclaims with Nietzsche 'the Man is a thing which must be surpassed.'

I make no apology for the personal note which emerges in this work more frequently than a modern fashion in scholarship allows, for it is my conviction that a book about Jesus which is not strongly personal and passionate (for or against him) might as well not be written.

I am glad to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professors Moffatt and Goodspeed for the help I have derived from their admirable translations. I would have followed one or the other more closely, were they not both of them so good. Where I have gone my own way it has not been out of ambition to be original. Rather than have it appear that any interpretation of mine is my idiosyncrasy, I should prefer to have the support of such authorities.

ROME, *December* 1928. WALTER LOWRIE.

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# JESUS ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

## Section 1. ¶¶ 1–4

## INTRODUCTORY

### Mk 1[1–13]

¶ 1. The Ancient Prophecy.

Mk 1[1–3]. **The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,**
[2] **as it is written in the prophet Isaiah,**

***Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,***
***Who shall prepare thy way.***
[3] ***The voice of one shouting in the desert:***
***'Prepare the way for the Lord,***
***Make level the paths for him!'***

'The beginning.' Here at the outset, with the very first word, we have the experience that, if this Gospel is 'simple' (and St. Mark's is surely the simplest of them all), it is by no means a simple task to interpret it. For it is not possible to expect agreement even about this first verse. It has been regarded as a sort of title for the whole work. In that case it might plausibly be considered an editorial addition, pointing to a time when the word 'Gospel' was used to denote the *story* of Jesus' deeds as well as (or more than) the message which he himself delivered—that is to say, as *we* use it, and as Jesus, according to St. Mark himself, never did. Yet even on this hypothesis we get only 'a sort of' title (as I have clumsily put it), and 'the beginning' must be taken to mean, *here begins*. Unless it were possible to conceive that this Evangelist, like St. Luke, had in mind

the subsequent ' spread of the Gospel ' (that is *our* phrase) through the growth of the Church, and meant to express the perception that the earthly life of Jesus was only the ' beginning ' of this vast movement. Compare St. Paul's phrase, Phil. $4^{15}$.

All of these opinions are reasonable, and all but the last are supported by the most esteemed authorities. You have a liberal choice offered you ; and if here at the beginning I offer you a choice of interpretations, it is to give myself an occasion for making the pledge that I shall not do it again. Also because at the beginning I would call your attention to the obvious fact that an ancient document is not so easy of interpretation as a recent one, and to the less obvious fact that the very simplicity of an author renders interpretation less secure. The interpretation of an ancient document requires all the paraphernalia of philology, history, archaeology, *etc.*, and the greater the simplicity of the author the less guarantee we have that we can apprehend his meaning by rigorously weighing his words. Finally, I am glad to point to this example as a cheering instance. Here, as in very many instances, when scholiasts disagree *it makes no serious difference.*

But, however unimportant this particular question may be, I do not shirk a decision. In this book I shall not try to commend myself to the learned as a person of perfectly balanced mind—always halting between two opinions. And I give my vote, not for any of the reasonable interpretations I have suggested, but for another which I *prefer* (though not with dogmatic assurance) for a number of reasons which it would be tedious to educe in *this* sort of a commentary, and for the major reason that it attributes a tolerable sense to the word ' Gospel '—a sense in which Mark (or even Jesus) could have employed the word. This interpretation is clearly indicated by the punctuation of the text as it is given above. It signifies that the Gospel did not *begin* at the moment when Jesus came out of the wilderness proclaiming, ' The time is fulfilled and God's Reign is near, repent and believe in the Gospel ' ($1^{15}$). The very terms here imply that these ' good tidings ' (*evangelion*, gospel) are not new. They must indeed be proclaimed, but not to be learned,

only to be *believed*. And it is expressly said that what Jesus preached was 'the Gospel of *God*.' In fact, this Word of God, the good tidings of His purpose to provide salvation for men, can be traced back to a very ancient time; and for Israel it was no vague reminiscence, no precarious tradition, for it was '*written*' (verse 2). The written Word in the Old Testament is the 'beginning' of the Gospel, and hence of Christianity. It is certain that this perception was not hidden from St. Mark, for it was a mystery acknowledged by the whole Church. Marcian (together with all Gnostics, old and new) cut himself off from the Church when he repudiated the Old Testament and the God who speaks through it. Therefore it does not seem to me too venturesome to suppose (though I can appeal only to Origen and Irenaeus for support) that Mark means to express this thought when he says, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in the prophet Isaiah, *etc.*'

With more diffidence I raise the question whether St. John may not have found in this first word of St. Mark's Gospel the suggestion which prompted him to write, 'In the beginning was the Word.' At all events, he was following the same track, but going far back beyond Isaiah, beyond Moses, beyond Adam (hence utterly supralapsarian !), beyond the Creation, hence, in timeless duration, to the Word (*Logos*) which was not yet uttered, which was Love and hence creative, which was in active relation (*pros*) with God, and was divine.

'The Gospel.' It would be superfluous to insist that the word means glad tidings. Everybody knows that. But does everybody reflect that it is not properly used of *all* tidings (gospels of this and that, as men say lightly) —opinions with or without support which men might be inclined to welcome and therefore prone to believe—but only of the incredible message of God's love, forgiveness, and salvation? Commonly this is spoken of absolutely, as 'the Gospel.' But being such a message as it is, we could not give it sure credence did we not apprehend that it is God's Word, '*God's* Gospel.' It is a *revelation*—or else it has only the stability of a man's 'will to believe,' and *that* (though it be bolstered up by the collective will) is hardly

capable of affirming itself in the face of three experiences : doubt and temptation and the knowledge of our ill desert. Only when we do not know that we are lost can we believe *that* message without a messenger. But then it is no longer *that* message, for in our self-complacency we do not ask to be saved but only to be *safe*—to remain for ever as we are. Therefore we cannot be indifferent to the quality of the messenger and to the authority which he represents. The Gospel, if it is to have the character of ' Gospel truth ' in the sense of our common phrase, must in the last resort be known as ' God's Gospel.' So St. Paul frequently names it—and just as often he names it ' the Gospel of Christ.' If between these two names there is any contrariety, St. Mark furnishes the most glaring instance of it. For whereas he at the start speaks of ' the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ ' (which he traces as far back as Isaiah), in verse 14 he represents Jesus as ' proclaiming the Gospel of God.' There is no contradiction here but a choice of phrase so highly significant that it suggests the query whether we have here to do with an author so ' simple ' as we have supposed—or whether, being in fact that simple ' helper ' of the Apostles who could be described as ' useful for ministering,' he was guided by the Holy Spirit to write better than he knew how. At all events, it is significant that Jesus did not preach his own Gospel, a message which he originated then and there, and for which he is the ultimate authority. He preached instead ' the Gospel of God,' *i.e. God's* Gospel—not a Gospel of which God is the subject, but the message and promise of which he is the author ; not the comforting (or disquieting !) assurance that God exists, and that he is such a God as he is, the glorious, terrible, paradoxical God, the LORD who proclaimed himself ' a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin—and that will by no means clear the disobedient.' Not what God *is* but what he has promised to *do* is the message of the Gospel. It goes without saying that from such a message God himself is not for a moment extraneous. You cannot have the Gospel *without* God, nor without *that* God.

But I return to the former phrase: 'The Gospel of Jesus Christ.' That means first of all the Gospel which Jesus preached. But taking it all in all it means more than that: it means the Gospel which He *was*, who 'was the Word and spoke it.' It means this and it *meant* it—from 'the beginning,' I may say. Not only now, and to us who, using the word as the title of the four canonical accounts of Jesus' ministry, fail almost to remember that in the Bible it has a deeper sense—a sense which St. Mark did not miss when he wrote the word Gospel at the head of his narrative and almost as its superscription. It is notorious that St. Paul expressly included Jesus in the Gospel—'How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, *etc.*' Here we have history—but not sheer history, not pure fact: it is fact inextricably confused (I do not scruple to use the word) with dogma. There is no Christian dogma that does not deal with history—else dogma would be indistinguishable from myth. But it is more important for *us* to note that there can be no such thing as Christian history (not even the history of Jesus) untinged with dogma. What was, what 'hath been' and therefore *is*—the past and the present—combine with the futuristic Gospel of hope. That is possible because Christ is 'contemporaneous' (Kierkegaard). This 'confusion' of history and hope did not originate with St. Paul. It was inevitable—as Jesus himself perceived. I am thinking of what he said about the woman who at the last supper but one anointed his head with precious ointment: '*Amen* I say to you, wherever the Gospel shall be preached all over the world, also what she did shall be talked about in memory of her.' How much more what Jesus *did*—not 'also' but as an integral part of the Gospel. But Jesus said such a thing only once. Is that a reason to suspect that he never said it? When could he have said it but at the end? It was at the next supper he spoke about *his* memorial. Enough. You cannot have the Gospel without Jesus.

But St. Mark does not speak about Jesus' Gospel. That is not a phrase you will find in the Bible. He speaks of 'the

Gospel of Jesus *Christ*.' With good reason. For Jesus is not only a component part of the Gospel: he is also our authority for it—and as Jesus of Nazareth, the humble peasant, he has no authority. Unless you can rest satisfied with a purely human authority, with what a man can discover by mystical search in the secret places of his own heart . . . *about the purposes of God*! Not even as 'the prophet' had he sufficient authority for such a message as he delivered. The time for prophets was past when the 'fulness of time' was come. 'God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets little by little and in various fashions, hath in these last days spoken unto us in a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.' With these words the Epistle to the Hebrews begins. Did St. Mark mean much less by the succinct phrases with which he introduces his simple story? He meant at least that we have the Gospel by the authority of Jesus Christ, and that we cannot have it and hold it without having *him*, and without having him as the Christ.

St. Mark also refers to the ancient prophets. It was in them he found 'the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.' The phrase is more significant than we have yet had time to observe. For in fact Christ was already a constituent of the Protevangelion. Through the prophets God told not only what he proposed to do for men, but that he would do it by his Son, the Christ. Several ancient texts read in this place, 'Jesus Christ *the Son of God*': but if this is a subsequent addition, we can cheerfully dispense with it, for it really *adds* nothing to the title Christ.

Do I seem to labour too long over this first verse? Well, I have still more to say. And about the word 'Gospel' I feel that I cannot say too much, when I observe how in my own land it is profaned by almost all who call themselves 'Evangelical' (*i.e.* Gospel) Christians—from the humblest secretary of the Y.M.C.A. up to the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. They all prate about the 'social Gospel.' It is only too likely that they are guilty of a solecism as well as of profanation. For if by 'social Gospel' they mean what Jesus called the 'second' commandment of the Law,

they mean a thing which the New Testament sharply contrasts with the Gospel and with grace, something which is (and is most solemnly) *exacted* of man, and is not the free gift which is *promised* in the Gospel. Or do they with the Law mingle a little Gospel? Perhaps they are grasping blindly at the promise of a perfect society (when '*God* shall wipe away every tear from their eyes,' when men shall come from the east and the west and—what could be more social? —shall recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the celestial banquet) and are determined to have it *now* (before the resurrection of the dead), and *here* (in a world not yet 'regenerated'), and (since God is slow) to bring all this about by themselves. But this is the Tower of Babel—and about that we shall have something to say when we reach verse 14.

Before leaving the first verse something more must be said about the double name 'JESUS-CHRIST.' Here I unite the two names by a hyphen to indicate how closely and inseparably they are conjoined, not only in our use of them (particularly when we swear), but also in the New Testament. To the simple this is so much a matter of course that they find no reason to reflect upon its significance. To the learned, on the other hand, this is so far from being a matter of course that they pronounce it *impossible*. 'Jesus *or* Christ,' they say: you cannot have both. This dilemma aptly summarizes the total character and effect of the modern liberal 'Lives' of Jesus. Even simple people feel the scandal of it, for nowadays they hear only about the 'historical Jesus,' and some one or another of the 'Lives' (garnished with devout phrases) has been innocently accepted by them as a book of devotion! In fact, all of these 'Lives,' however they may differ in detail (and by the introduction of pious phrases), are constructed on the same plan, have all of them the same intention of explaining Jesus, and (unintentionally) the same effect . . . of explaining him away. All this by means of psychology! For all pretend to be *biographies*—in spite of the fact that the early Church notoriously (and scandalously, we would say) showed no interest in the biography of Jesus;—neither St. Paul, who expressly disclaims any interest in 'Christ

according to the flesh,' nor the Synoptical Evangelists, who make hardly a reference to the childhood and youth of Jesus and confine their narrative to the *one* year of his public activity, nor St. John, who excludes programatically the notion that any importance might attach to the animal life (*bios*) of the external Logos in whom was life (*zoe*) in the highest sense. Even this does not reveal fully how disadvantageous for the biographer is the evidence furnished by the Evangelists. For, even if it were reasonable to suppose that in the course of one year an adult man —human but not all-too-human—*must* traverse the various stages of psychological development (from youthful optimism to mature disillusionment) which constitute the *movement* which is essential to the biography of a soul, the trouble is that the Evangelists give no hint of such a development and evidently knew nothing about it. For them Jesus was a figure cast all in one piece and all at one jet. The *story* has movement, but it is not a biographical movement. Where we look for psychological development we find only a series of psychological *discontinuities* (Schweitzer). Why did Jesus step out as a preacher ? Why did he leave Galilee at the height of his popularity ? Why wander then in pagan lands ? The Evangelists do not tell us what his motives were. Evidently they did not know, and they did not presume to inquire. So the biographer has to invent reasons : a vague sense that he was called to carry on John's work as a preacher of righteousness (which gradually developed into the conviction, or almost the conviction, that he was the Christ) ; waning success in Galilee (in spite of the ' five thousand ' that followed him into the wilderness !) ; fear of Herod which led him into the region of Caesarea Philippi ; and finally the timorous hope that his cause might succeed at Jerusalem (where the Romans ruled and would give short shrift to any man who called himself a king !). But the trouble is that the discontinuities in the Gospel story are not merely gaps which the imagination is invited to fill in : they are *irrational* dislocations. Hence certain psychiatrists found in Jesus' apparently motiveless behaviour good reasons for affirming that he was a madman : delusions of grandeur (after his

baptism), pathological dejection (at the apex of his success), a crazy fear which accounts for his unstable wanderings, and a groundless reversion to optimism which leads him to his death at Jerusalem. Others, in view of these patent discontinuities, found just as good reasons for affirming that Jesus never existed. They could plausibly urge that narrated events which have no pragmatic consequences (like bodies which cast no shadow) are not *real* events. At this juncture Albert Schweitzer attested the collapse of the bold and laborious construction of the ' Life of Jesus '—on which a whole century had been at work, ' a figure sketched by Rationalism, enlivened by Liberalism, and dressed up by Modern Theology in the clothes of historical science.' It succumbed, as he justly said, not to attack from without, but by reason of its own inherent weakness. Since Schweitzer published his *Skizze* * at the beginning of this century (1901), followed five years later by his *Quest of the Historical Jesus*,† it has become with every year more evident that he has written an obituary, and that no scholar of light and leading will again essay to compose a ' Life of Jesus.'

' *This* Jesus,' Schweitzer can say, ' never existed.' But the Jesus of the Gospels did certainly exist—and has never been *explained*. The superscription ' Jesus-Christ ' forbids every attempt at psychological explanation. And it suggests that in the person of Jesus there was an element (perhaps the ruling element in all his actions) which lies completely beyond the range of psychology. For though Jesus had a *psyche* (' reasonable soul with human flesh consisting '), it is certain that (like us) he had a spirit, and possible that (unlike us, who are ruled by the soul and only tormented by the spirit) he was ruled by the spirit and tormented only by the soul and the ' flesh,' the ' soulish body.' Perhaps ? But this is only what St. Paul says in 1 Cor. $15^{45}$: ' The first Adam became a living *soul* ; the last Adam a life-giving *spirit*.' Perhaps again (though St. Paul does not say this) his regnant spirit was forming (even ' in the days of his flesh ') the ' spiritual body ' which was not subject to corruption.

* My translation entitled *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, 2nd ed. A. & C. Black, 1924.

† A. & C. Black, 1910.

Is this something more than an interpretation of St. Mark? At all events, it is something prejudicially necessary to a right interpretation at a time when many have been led to suppose that it is from St. Mark and the other Evangelists we derive the dilemma 'Jesus or Christ,' or perhaps the conviction that Jesus was not the Christ, or perhaps the suspicion that he never pretended to be anything of the kind. No, all of the Evangelists exclude such inferences when they write the name 'Jesus-Christ.' I am not doing more than interpret this name *in the sense in which they used it*. Neither were they guilty of the greater impiety of depicting a man who *became* God. That in effect is not so much to exalt man (according to *our* purpose) as to debase God, bringing him so near to our level, ignoring the *distance*. Renan introduces his 'Life of Jesus' with a trivial remark about Jesus: 'In Nazareth there was born a man of such an extraordinary character that I have no quarrel with those who call him God.' But it is not a trivial fault in a theologian who hails this saying as a precious concession. For this is the pet blasphemy of our day. It is not that people deny the divinity of Christ (tautology!), but that they fail to apprehend the divinity of God, the distance between the creature and the Creator. We take delight in the 'life of Jesus' (Jack and the beanstalk!) because it shows that, though *we* have been too slothful to climb the steep ascent of heaven, another man *did* it—hence any one of us might. We try anxiously to stage our common worship (even in what are called the non-liturgical Churches) with a view to producing a 'numinous' experience. But the word God no longer prompts such an experience—unless in the fierce conviction of a horrid oath. We *utter* the word, and are ourselves aware that it has no ring. One school of churchmen makes a point of saying Almightygod (*sic*)—and it sounds smaller still. Loud shouting will not help. What is lacking? We can discover in the Scriptures what is lacking with us. With us even in our most religious and mystical mood—and especially then. It is the sense of distance, of complete 'otherness,' of absolute transcendence. Paradoxically, it is when Jesus speaks of his heavenly *Father* we hear this note

of distance most clearly and most sharply: 'Fear Him,' 'Nevertheless, not my will but thine,' '*My God*, why hast thou forsaken me?' 'The God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (that is His *Name* in the New Testament) is a God so transcendent that it is preposterous to think of a *man* becoming *God*, or even that man might approach God, in spite of the distance—but not impossible that God, vanquishing the distance which he made, might approach man and might become man; for with *this* God 'all things are possible.'

In the most archaic documents of the New Testament (those, namely, which St. Luke made use of for the earlier chapters of the Acts) the absolute distance of the Divine is expressed by the title that was applied to Jesus: 'Thy holy Servant Jesus' (Acts $4^{27, 30}$). That sounds strange to us now, and inadequate; but at least it preserves inviolate the prerogative of God who gives, commands and sends. The Christ—King over men—was God's Servant, God-sent, a *godsend*—not an instance of Titanism, Supermanism, snatching the divine fire. So Peter at Pentecost concluded his sermon (Acts $2^{36}$): 'God hath *made* Jesus both Lord and Christ.' A phrase which, though it may seem not adequate to the theologian, puts the emphasis where it belongs: God was the agent, not man.

No well-instructed person needs to be told (for it is information imparted in the Sunday school) that 'Christ' —*i.e.* the Anointed One, the King promised and expected—is a title, not a *name*. Properly it is '*the Christ*.' And in the earliest days of the Church this title, *as such*, was frequently used—the need being urgent to prove to outsiders 'that Jesus is the Christ.' Later, but still in view of unbelieving Jews, St. Matthew's Gospel was written with the aim of proving, by the use and misuse of Old Testament prophecy, that Jesus was the Christ. Later still that also was the purpose expressed in the Gospel of St. John ($20^{31}$) addressed to the Gentile world. That is to say, to those who were without, the Christian faith had to be expressed in a disjunctive proposition: Jesus *is* the Christ. That proposition had to be proved, and it could be denied. One might retort, He is *not*. *Within* the Church the faith was

expressed by a tautological proposition. 'Christ' had become the proper *name* of Jesus. This suggested no possibility of doubt and left no place for retort. So also with the fuller confession, 'Jesus Christ Lord' (*Iesous Christos Kurios*), there was needed strictly no copulative verb, nor even the definite article. This was by no means a matter of course. The name 'Jesus-Christ,' though there is no document of the New Testament which antedates its use, must have had a history behind it, as intense as it was short. It registers the swift completion of a process whereby the whole faith became implicit in the Name (Phil. 2[9–11]). It is the *whole* faith, for no man can say Jesus Christ the Lord but in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12[3]). The point of this is, as we make application of it here to the interpretation of St. Mark, that the Evangelist writes in the Church and for the Church, in the full assurance of the faith. If you get anything else out of St. Mark's Gospel, you get it in spite of him. The same is true, of course, of the other Gospels. The point is that it is not less true of St. Mark than of St. John. Hence I have expanded his brief superscription to show that it is as weighty as St. John's long Prologue. It used to be said, humorously but truly, with regard to the Unitarian controversy, in that stage of it which was fought out in the field of Biblical exegesis, that it resulted in the admission that 'the Bible is an orthodox book.' With respect to the Synoptic Gospels this apprehension was slowly arrived at. It is affirmed now with the cynical implication that *all* the Gospels are almost equally prejudiced.

It is all the more surprising then that, being frankly prejudiced in their point of view, they are nevertheless so candid in their narrative of the story of Jesus. All—more or less. (Even St. John, having finished his Prologue, speaks henceforth only of Jesus—uses this name, indeed, more than the others do, and with more emphasis. And this name stood for the common man who came out of Nazareth in Galilee.) St. Mark most of all—and this is one of the proofs of his priority. A proof also, I take it, that he had the candour of Peter to draw upon. But even so, and granting to Mark himself a candid purpose to be objective, it is

very astonishing that, writing from a later point of view (the point of view of the Church), he succeeded so perfectly (with perhaps only two slips) in maintaining the perspective of the earlier days when Jesus was not yet suspected of being the Christ or of claiming to be.

This is perhaps the reason why St. Mark's Gospel has not been popular in the Church—until recent times when we have been delighted to discover in it the *humanity* of Jesus. An easy discovery! For certainly Mark took no pains to hide it from us. And say what you will against theologians, you have to acknowledge that the Catholic Church defended this *dogma* stoutly against all sorts of Docetists and Gnostics. Not only at the first, but tardily when the Crucifix, which depicts too unsparingly the last degradation of this poor man of Nazareth, was raised as the standard of the Church. No, the fact that Jesus was man is not the new discovery. What distinguishes our age is the failure to discover that God is God. We are naturally enough at a loss to conceive how ' the Absolute ' of the philosophers might become man. And the immanent God, the Soul of the universe, cannot be incarnate in one man any more really than he is with every man—or than he is incorporate with a stone.

I am grimly aware that no one who reads so far as to the end of this interpretation of the first verse will fail to detect that I am a reactionary, a Fundamentalist. I say, ' grimly,' because fate is so facetious as to class me with this company. I was driven from the denomination in which I was born because I did not believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Tolerated in the Church where I now minister, I am commonly regarded as a dangerous person. In the company of theologians of any sect or of any school I feel like a lion in a den of Daniels. I have always read more science than theology. I believe in the Copernican theory of the stars, and therefore I do not look for a heaven *above* and a hell *beneath*. I am so modern as to believe in the doctrine of ' relativity,' and ' I accept the universe ' as it is so described with joy, because it suggests *edges* where things end and time ends too and eternity begins. I believe in evolution (though not of the Darwinian stamp), and therefore I admit that ' the first man is of the earth earthy,' a mere ' living

soul' with a 'soulish body.' I have only this against me, that I am pious—religiously devout from my youth up, with some traces even now left. But I early learned to appraise this trait for what it is worth, divining that it was 'human, all-too-human'—before psychology had begun to prove that to our generation. Religiousness, anyway, is hardly a distinguishing mark of Fundamentalists. Your mystics are the characteristically religious people, and they are not inclined to seek God in a written revelation when they can find him within themselves. I complain that things have come to a pretty pass when a Christian is suspected of Fundamentalism merely because he believes that Jesus is Christ. That belief, mark you, I have not professed here. I speak as an *interpreter* of St. Mark. If I were a biographer of Jesus, I might feel free to construct my own picture. If I were a commentator, I might damn the author verse by verse. I might look St. Mark in the face and say,

> 'Thou fool!
> Thine ears are stuffed and stopped despite their length,
> And, oh! the foolishness thou countest faith!'

There is no one more prone to criticism than I—and the Fundamentalists will feel this before I am through. *They* will not count me of their sect! It is a permissible adventure, as I account it, to delve down beneath the surface of the narrative with the hope of discovering the historical fact-in-itself. Courageous metaphysicists! But those who have thus sought to find the 'historical Jesus' have come back to the surface with nothing in their hands except (as *their* critic has said) . . . a Jesus that never existed. I at all events am writing simply as an interpreter; and it seems to me that an interpreter is not faithful unless he endeavours to the best of his ability to render fairly the view of the author as a whole—leaving it to the reader, if he will, to reject it as a whole, with full knowledge of what he is rejecting.

Not being a Fundamentalist, I prefer that you should take me for an atheist, speaking with a scornful detachment about all this *Christ*endom, about all these *Christ*ians who

like the nickname but hesitate to confess that Jesus is the Christ.

Verse 2. *As it is written in the prophet Isaiah.* A tight place for the Fundamentalist! For his whole house comes tumbling about his ears if he has to confess that St. Mark *erred* in attributing to Isaiah a prophecy which is actually written in Malachi ($3^1$): 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way.' But not too tight a place to crawl out of! In early times (for there were Fundamentalists in those days) the job was comparatively easy: a pious scribe had only to alter the text. No wonder then that (as the marginal note of the Revised Version puts it) 'some ancient authorities read *in the prophets*.' That is no longer possible; but one can retire to the last ditch and assert that *if* the autograph of the Scriptural writer could be recovered, we should find no error in it. This last ditch is an ignominious position, but it is secure from direct attack, for no textual critic presumes to claim that he can restore precisely the 'original manuscript.' I do not know if Fundamentalists of such heroic mould exist any longer—anywhere but in America. At any rate it is not worth while to say anything more about them. I have no interest in defending St. Mark from the only too plausible charge that he made a slight slip here. I think, however, that this is the only case in which he appears at a disadvantage in comparison with Matthew or Luke, who quote only the second passage ('The voice of one shouting, *etc.*'), which really is found in ('second') Isaiah ($40^3$). And I can see some excuse for him—in the fact that he had in mind a considerable store of passages from the Old Testament which had already been gathered together by the early Church for the attestation of the Messiahship of Jesus (without caring much to distinguish by which of God's mouthpieces they had been uttered), and that for the sake of the exceeding brevity with which he proposed to deal with this 'beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ' he quoted only two and abbreviated one of them. The one sure and the only essential thing about the Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament is this, that a long line of prophetic men did arouse and keep alive in Israel the expectation that God

would intervene in the history of mankind to set the wrong right and to establish righteousness *for ever*—and that during all those centuries there was nowhere else in all the world where such a hope was cherished. Only in Israel was the golden age set in the future and religious faith expressed as hope. Elsewhere men might be contented or despairing—or with stoical fortitude 'accept the universe.' In Israel men could not utterly despair, neither could they be content with this world as it is. I was wrong when I said not long ago, in a little book entitled *The Birth of the Divine Child*,* that Virgil's prophecy in the Fourth Eclogue was independent of Hebrew prophecy. Elwood Worcester pointed out to me my error. I was following too closely the lead of Norden and accepted too lightly the light argument he adduces. It was a far cry to the Thebes of 2000 B.C., or even to Zarathustra. And where else but in the prophets of Israel was there *then* the least glimmer of that hope which inspired the Cumean Sibyl?

It is noteworthy that this is the only place where St. Mark introduces a Messianic prophecy. That is one of the distinctions of his Gospel. And it is a striking fact that this prophecy which he selects (and abbreviates) contains only an incidental reference to the Messiah. Clearly this is because the Evangelist is dealing here strictly with 'the *beginning* of the Gospel.' This is the place for the prophecy concerning the Forerunner. That is what the people were expecting *first*, and until the Forerunner had appeared (whom they spoke of therefore as 'the Coming One'—*ho erchomenos*) they would not be looking for the Christ. It is like the stroke of the bell which gives warning that the hour is about to strike.

But the incidental reference to the Messiah is significant of St. Mark's belief and the belief of the Church. For he who is to follow the Forerunner is 'the Lord' himself (Jahve). This then, it would seem, may serve to define how much St. Mark meant by the Name 'Jesus Christ.' This was in fact the prediction of the prophets—that God himself would come. Necessarily, for who else could do what had to be done? On the other hand, this idea was

* Longmans, 1926.

too preposterous to be steadily held, and in the same breath this coming Saviour was represented as another than the Lord, or not quite the Lord. That was the radical ambiguity in the Old Testament prophecy: and that is the ambiguity of the person of Jesus Christ (Mk $12^{36}$). Was it resolved or only restated in the doctrine of the Trinity?

I have said already more than an interpreter of St. Mark needs to say at this point about the Old Testament prophecy, for Mark uses it here simply to introduce John the Baptist.

> *'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,*
> *Who shall prepare thy way.*
> *"Prepare the way for the Lord,*
> *Make level the paths for him."'*

'John appeared.' The prophecy of Isaiah aptly describes John. That of Malachi had to be altered to suit the purpose, for it properly read, 'to prepare *my* way.' A straight line led from the ancient prophets to John. After the lapse of centuries, and as though time made no absolute break, a genuine prophet appeared, who even in dress (the 'hairy garment' and the 'leather belt,' 1 Kings $1^{7}$, Zech. $13^{4}$) and in his ascetic manner of life (*cp.* Lk $5^{33}$, $7^{33}$) revived the old tradition. Substantially his message was the same: 'repentance for the remission of sins';—repentance meaning not merely sorrow but amendment of life. The old prophets enforced their message by pointing to 'the great and terrible Day of the Lord.' That is the sterner side of 'the Gospel of the Kingdom of God,' and Matthew and Luke were doubtless right in representing that this was the theme of John's preaching ('the wrath to come,' and 'the Kingdom of God,' Mt $3^{2, 7}$, Lk $3^{7}$). This means that he (differing more from the early prophets than he knew) was an exponent of apocalyptic eschatology, which began with Daniel and characterized all the anonymous prophecy which bridges the gap between the Old and the New Testaments. Being interested in the Kingdom, John was necessarily interested in the Christ (*i.e.* the King) and therefore in his forerunner. New and characteristic was the symbolical cleansing which he exacted—baptism.

¶ 2. John the Baptist.

Mk $1^{4-8}$. **John appeared, baptizing in the desert and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.**
**5 And the whole country of Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him and experienced baptism under him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.** **6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins, and ate locusts and wild honey.** **7 And he announced:**

***'The mightier one will come after me,***
***whose sandal strings I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.***
***8 I have baptized you with water,***
***but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'***

Here it must be remembered that the people had been taught by the scribes (Mk $9^{11-13}$) to expect the return of Elijah before the coming of 'the great and terrible Day of the Lord' (Malachi $4^{5}$). Literally his *return*; for, like Enoch (and possibly Moses), he had not died but been carried up into heaven. It would seem that John had much to recommend him to his contemporaries as the expected Elijah. The Evangelist enumerates here the marks of identification: the dress, the ascetic life in the desert, and the stern moral earnestness, reserving for a later occasion the account of his boldness in rebuking a king. Evidently John had the 'spirit' of Elijah, but . . . he lacked the 'power' (Lk $1^{17}$). Elijah the miracle worker could be counted on to work still greater miracles when he returned to earth—and John did none. Hence he was not recognized in this rôle. The scribes could give no account of the 'authority' by which he acted (Mk $11^{29-32}$). Perhaps for the same reason John himself in his humility failed to recognize that he corresponded to Elijah (Jn $1^{21}$): to distinguish himself and his mission he could appeal to no prophecy but only that of the 'Voice.' Therefore he prophesied that 'the Mightier One' was 'coming,' and even from his prison he peered out, hoping to descry him in the surrounding darkness. Jesus, on the other hand, though he lacked the ascetic traits of Elijah and John (Lk $7^{33, 34}$), *did* perform miracles; hence the

people suspected that *he* might be Elijah (Mk $6^{15}$, $8^{28}$), and John from his prison, hearing of his 'works,' sent some of his own disciples to ask him, 'Art thou "the Coming One," or are we to wait for another?' (Mt $11^{2, 3}$).

This is Albert Schweitzer's construction.* It seems to me that it is proved merely by being stated. One has only to note that 'the Coming One' (*ho erchomenos*) is used as a familiar designation *for the Forerunner*, who 'must first come' (Mk $9^{11, 12}$) before men begin to look for the Christ. To this usage the acclaim of Jesus on his entrance into Jerusalem was no exception (whatever may be said of Mt $23^{39}$), for in spite of Jesus' staging of his reception, the people could not perceive that he was the Messiah. The first acclaim was therefore for 'the one coming in the Lord's name': the second (according to St. Mark) was for the Kingdom which his coming led them to expect (Mk $11^{9, 10}$). To the question of John no direct answer was possible so long as he did not recognise himself as the Forerunner. Pointing to what he did, Jesus could only say, 'Blessed is he who findeth in me no ground of offence.' But when the messengers were gone he spoke to the crowds at great length about John, yet mysteriously, for the people were simply not in a position to understand: 'If you are willing to accept it, he himself is Elijah the Coming One (*ho mellon erchesthai*): he that hath ears let him hear' (Mt $11^{15}$).

Jesus could discover that John was the Forerunner because he knew himself to be the Christ. *Vice versa*, no one (not even John himself) could suspect that Jesus was the Christ until John was recognized as the Forerunner. Hence the disciples had to be prepared for the revelation of the Messiahship of Jesus by learning that John was Elijah: 'As for Elijah, I tell you he *has come*, and they have done to him whatever they pleased' (Mk $9^{11-13}$). If it was Jesus (Mt $11^{10}$, Lk $7^{27}$) who descried in Malachi $3^{1}$ the prophecy which fitted John, we can understand why he changed the 'my' to 'thy.' St. Mark applies this prophecy. He knew *then* (of course) that John was the Forerunner. Whether he knew that John did not know it, I do not know. At all events he has written no word which falsifies the historical

* *Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, pp. 139–156.

perspective—and that can be said of no other Evangelist. It is not easy for us now to adjust ourselves to this perspective. John conceived that he was the forerunner of the Forerunner, and instead (without knowing it) he was pointing to Christ.

It is an evident and innocent exaggeration to say that there flocked to John in the desert 'the whole country of Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem,' yet it does not do full justice to the popularity of the Baptist. For Jesus at least came from Galilee, and Jn 1[40] insinuates that his four favourite disciples were first disciples of the Baptist. There is every reason to believe that the movement was immensely popular and that the crowds were great. One wonders how John could baptize them all. And when one reads (Mt 3[7]) of his indignation at seeing 'many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism' one wonders, too, why he *consented* to baptize them. Both questions are perhaps answered by the old Syriac version, which suggests (according to Wellhausen) that, in spite of the fact that 'baptist' implies an active agent and 'baptized' is a passive form of the verb, the crowds really baptized themselves, *i.e.* they went down into the river to wash as an acknowledgment that they needed cleansing from their sins. John was active only in exhorting them to do it—and he could not hinder them.

'*Baptism*'—the ceremonial washing of the hands *etc.* (Mk 7[3, 4])—was commonly practised among the Jews; and for Gentiles who joined the sacred nation the washing of the whole body was required, to cleanse them from the defilement of paganism. It was a great humiliation for a Jew to confess that he needed a cleansing no less thorough. Immersing one's self in the river was in itself a confession of sin. But it seems as if 'confessing their sins' meant more than that. It is the same phrase that is used for the Christian practice in Jas. 5[16]. We can imagine what the effect must have been if many of these people made a vocal and public and particular confession of their sins. But in itself a sacrament—any sacrament—is humiliating to man. It means that he has to receive and not to give. But most of all baptism! It is through a lowly door we stoop to enter the Kingdom of God. That is not more true of John's baptism than of

Christian baptism. They are both ' baptisms of repentance.' The difference is (as John also understood it) that the first was *preliminary* to the ' remission of sins.' For it was understood that remission of sins belonged *in* the Messianic age—or if before it, only at that moment between night and day, when, according to Joel ($2^{28-32}$, Acts $2^{17-21}$), the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh and every kind of sign and wonder will be seen. *That* John and his contemporaries expected in the time of the Forerunner : it came about with the exaltation of Christ.

John taught his disciples certain forms of prayer (Lk $11^{1}$) and exacted an ascetic discipline (Mk $2^{18}$). Besides this they had the practice of baptism. That was enough to mark them off as a sect and give permanence to what was meant to be a momentary gesture and a cry. For man indeed is incurably religious ! The school of John persisted alongside of the school of Jesus, even after their master's decapitation. Many years later some of them were found as far away as Ephesus and proved well disposed to the Church (Acts $18^{25}$, $19^{3}$). But in spite of this deviation due to man's infirmity as a ' religious animal,' the line ran straight, from the ' beginning,' through the ancient prophets, through John, to Jesus.

¶ 3. Baptism of Jesus.

Mk $1^{9-11}$. **Now it was in those days that Jesus arrived from Nazareth in Galilee and underwent baptism in the Jordan under John.** $^{10}$ **And the moment he rose out of the water he saw the heavens being riven asunder and the Spirit coming down to enter into him like a dove.** $^{11}$ **And there was a voice out of the heavens :**

***' Thou art my Son, my Beloved,***
***and on thee rests my favour.'***

Why did Jesus undergo the baptism of repentance if he was without sin ? In the first place it is significant to note that this is a question which did not trouble St. Mark. We must presume therefore that it had not yet emerged for the Church in which he wrote and *for* which he wrote. It is one of the many questions which *theology* raises—

without being able to solve them. Strictly, therefore, it does not concern the interpretation of St. Mark. But the question having once been raised *does* concern us. And it concerns St. Mark, too, when we inquire with wonder, How was it possible he found no scandal in this thing? For the author of St. Matthew's Gospel felt obliged to apologize for it, and the author of the Fourth Gospel omitted the baptism altogether. The only motive ever suggested is that which St. Matthew supplies: 'It becometh us (*i.e.* man as man) to fulfil all righteousness.' That does not lack plausibility, if we understand what 'righteousness' means *here*. Namely, *not* what we mean by it: the absolute ethical norm; but (as in Mt 6$^{1}$) a religious practice. Astonishing as the fact is, Jesus was a religious man! The divine Son stood in a *religious* relation to the divine Father—a relation of awful reverence. That is indeed strange to one who knows what religion *is*, how human a thing, how soulish, how perfectly explained and exploded by psychology. And how much of *eros* there enters into it (not to use the vile word *libido*), from the adolescent's conversion to the mystic's experience of union with Deity! All-too-human!—even if it be the highest reach of man's attainment, his utmost possible possibility, stretching after God—without the least possibility that we shall ever apprehend Him, unless God stretch down and apprehend us. And in this connection it is important to observe that Jesus' religiousness was not expressed only in original and spontaneous acts of devotion—his calling God *Father* (a name full of *eros*) and his solitary prayers. No, nor only in his acceptance of the divine ordinance which applied to him alone—'how it behoved Christ to suffer.' He recognized that 'it behoves *us*'—*i.e.* all men, and the Christ too just in so far as 'it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren' (Heb. 2$^{17}$)—'to perform *all* righteousness'—even the pious practices which are irrelevant to morals, the ordinances of a national or 'positive' religion, even to 'the least commandment,' the jots and tittles of the Law. Not as though the observances of religion constituted a means of *earning* entrance into the Kingdom of God—for that is God's free gift. Yet never-

theless (most trenchantly he warns us!) scrupulousness about these things does determine one's *place* there, as 'least' or 'greatest.' There is no doubt that Jesus was on the whole a 'practising' Jew. He exacted of his disciples that they should observe even those practices which the tradition of the scribes had added to the Law (Mt $23^{2, 3}$) —that they should be more *religious* (Mt $5^{20}$) than the Pharisees! That was his *programme*. The Gospels reveal how far he was from living up to it. For whenever religion conflicted with the 'Second Commandment' he had not a moment's doubt which must yield—and how much more when it conflicted (as it often does) with the 'First Commandment,' with love to God! So the Pharisees accounted him, in spite of his religiousness, a sinner—*i.e.* an irreligious man. Jesus *was*, in this sense, as irreligious as the great prophets of Israel. He quotes Hosea, who was the first to perceive that God is more than religion, and that religion may stand between man and God as a barrier, instead of being a medium of contact: 'If ye had known what this meaneth, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," ye would not have condemned the guiltless' (Mt $12^{7}$, Hos. $6^{6}$). 'Whole burnt offerings and sacrifice'—of course, said the scribe (Mk $12^{33}$), I heartily agree with you. But Jesus did *not* mean *that*—the animal sacrifices which were no longer a characteristic and vital expression of Jewish piety and were essentially not different from the sacrifices offered in Athens and Rome. He meant the things that were accounted *then* most important in religion, as sacrifices were in Hosea's day. In this instance he is referring especially to the Sabbath observance. And in speaking to us he would mean what *we* count most important—including the observance of the Lord's Day. We imagine complacently that he was intent upon convincing the Jews that *their* religion would not save them, any more than the pagans would be saved by the various religions they profess—and that therefore they must adopt the Christian religion. 'Christian religion'! What an anachronism to attribute this idea to Christ! This phrase is a part of the Humanistic heritage of the Reformation. In the New Testament, religion is never spoken of but with disparagement. The notion that

religion can save a man is *our* thought, because we like to think that we can save ourselves (at least in part)—rather than be saved altogether by God. In our day we have learned a great deal about religions—from archaeology, from history, from travel, and from psychology. We have reached the just conclusion that the more they differ the more they are the same thing. We are therefore inclined to ask, Why does one religion save a man more surely than another? Quite so. Jesus would have said that a whole Congress of religions could not save one single man —that all the Towers of Babel men have ever reared, if they were piled one upon another, would not reach up to heaven.

And yet—we are men, 'nothing that is human is alien to us,' religion least of all, and 'it behooves us to fulfil all righteousness.' That is not the First Commandment, nor the Second; it may be a third. Jesus was a devout student of the Scriptures—of the Prophets especially, but also of the Psalms, which are profoundly religious. He recognized that the Sabbath 'was made for man,' and he was not altogether unobservant of the newer practices of the synagogue. But some of the oldest practices—animal sacrifices, for example—if they could justly be said to be made *for* man rather than *by* him, were obviously fit for him no longer; and many of the newer practices were inept from the beginning. 'John appeared'—and it is not difficult to believe that Jesus found this stern preacher of righteousness heartily congenial to him. There in the wilderness was the sort of church he would like to belong to. And the *initiation* could hardly have seemed an obstacle to one who was 'meek and lowly in heart,' who said feelingly to his disciples, 'When ye have done *all* say, We are unprofitable servants.' There is a formal element in all sacraments. Baptism *is* an initiation. I can imagine a man accepting Christian baptism *conditionally*, that is, with the understanding that, *if he had any sins* they would be washed away. The Episcopal Church in America is now about to omit from the baptismal office the solemn statement that 'all men are conceived and born in sin'—by this omission excluding the notion that baptism is meant *only* for sinners.

It becomes *simply* an initiation. There remains, of course, the *abrenuntio*: 'I renounce the devil and all his works.' But that would be no obstacle to Jesus! He was about to do it more dramatically in a more solitary wilderness. And perhaps no other man ever did it with a whole heart. I am not sure I understand what St. Peter meant when he said of baptism (1 Pet. $3^{21}$) that it is '*not* the washing away of dirt from the flesh,' for I should suppose that it meant that first of all. Perhaps St. Peter meant to say it was not *merely* that—that it had also a more positive significance, *viz.* 'a quest for a clean conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' But I can think of a very serious sense in which it is true that baptism is 'not the washing away the dirt of the flesh'; for, in fact, this is *not* washed away either by Jewish or by Christian baptism—except proleptically, with a view to *our* resurrection from the dead. To any one who thinks that *his* baptism has washed him clean I would say, in the words of a wise old negro woman, who was a friend of my mother, 'I suspect you're saying more than what you're alluding to.' Was St. Paul unbaptized when he wrote the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans? And is there any reason why Jesus might not have sighed as ardently, 'who will deliver me from this body of death?' We, with our modern Humanism, have lost all sense for the fact that for God it was a profound humiliation to become man. When we say that Christ was a *perfect* man we think we are flattering God. Humanism when it is unequally yoked with religion cannot stop short of the deification of man. And yet it would seem as if in our age, when we are obliged to think much about the origins of man, and can hardly escape the reflection that we have not completed the process of working out the brute and letting the ape and tiger die, we might feel some sympathy for the doctrine of original sin. (But this is not the first time I reflect how difficult it would be to reconcile science and . . . *modern* theology.)

For this complexity of reasons I see no scandal in the baptism of Jesus. Moreover I can understand in part why Jesus liked this institution of John's so well that he adopted it as the initiation into his sect. For his sect also was to

be a sect for sinners—hence the most catholic sect, capable potentially of incorporating all men (' for Jesus knew what is in man '), but restricted actually to such as recognized themselves to be sinners. About ' original sin ' Jesus had nothing to say, but about its universality we have his trenchant reply to complacent questioners about the relativity of other people's sin : ' Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' And I can conceive that he learned more about sin by victoriously combating it than we by our compliance.

The baptism of John had also this to recommend it to Jesus, that it was an *eschatological* sacrament. It was futuristic. It looked forward ' *unto* the remission of sins ' —in the Messianic day. What was visible, experimental, phenomenal, at the river Jordan where John was baptizing was merely a confession of sins and a washing with water. Phenomenally there was no change made in the individuals thus washed. And yet it was a sacrament *ex opere operato*, a *pledge* of forgiveness in the Messianic age. Else why was John so deeply disturbed at seeing certain Pharisees and Sadducees taking advantage of this opportunity of escaping the wrath to come ? Sacraments and eschatology naturally belong together. The only apocalyptic book in the New Testament plays with several fantastic examples : the white stone inscribed with a new name ; and the sealing of God's servants upon their foreheads (Rev. $2^{17}$, $7^{3}$). *Good* examples because they profess to work no phenomenal change in the recipient, but make an existential change by the assurance of eternal life. Of such a nature (if you will receive it) was the sacrament with which Jesus blessed the multitudes that followed him into the desert when he was bidding farewell to Galilee. For to eat with the Messiah *there* was a pledge that they should eat with him again at the Messianic banquet in heaven. A pledge not invalidated by the fact that the people did not understand what he meant and did not even suspect that he was the Christ. What more can be meant by a sacrament *ex opere operato* ?—unless it means that a phenomenal change is made in the recipient which is *not* made. A pledge ! A sure pledge ! And yet no one ventures to use the word

sacrament with a view to its celestial promise without recognizing in the same breath that it is conditional . . . upon the inscrutable purpose of God.

St. Mark (in contrast with Mt and Jn) represents that both the vision and the voice were for Jesus alone and revealed to no one else his secret. If it were simply a choice of plausibilities, there can be no question which version one would prefer. And that not merely because a 'subjective vision' and an auditory hallucination are easier to believe in. Totally foreign to St. Mark and his age is our disparaging description of a vision as 'subjective.' We mean that such a vision corresponds to no reality: he would conceive that it represents reality of a superior sort. One might expect that we, taught by the Critical Philosophy that neither vision, nor audition, nor any other sense, reproduces the very form of the 'thing-in-itself,' and eager to reconcile our religion with this philosophy, would be willing to admit that, though the sky was not physically rent asunder, nor any sound propagated by waves of air, God could speak to Jesus both by vision and by voice. Or if we apply a practical test as the criterion of reality and demand that what professes to be real must have pragmatic consequences, we must perceive that here if anywhere the consequences were real, both in Jesus' consciousness and in widening circles throughout the world —with the retardation that might be expected in the human medium. I remark that in human history everything thenceforth proceeded *as if* the vision and the voice were real. And with that I do *not* commit myself to the philosophy of Vaihigher or to any other less astute doctrine of Pragmatism.

The three Synoptical Gospels agree substantially in reporting the voice, and in the face of this concordance it is *uncritical* to prefer a later version which follows the easy path of completing the familiar verse of the second Psalm: 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' Such a preference can only be prompted by the prejudice that before this moment of *adoption* Jesus was not the Son of God. It is easy enough to understand why in another respect the Evangelists are not in accord. St. Matthew

intends to represent that the voice (' *This is* my Beloved Son ') was a public testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus —superfluous for *him* and therefore addressed to the multitude. But he has not altered St. Mark's account radically enough to disguise the fact that there did not follow upon this the pragmatic consequences we have a right to expect; for to the end of his ministry Jesus is regarded simply as a ' prophet ' (Mt $21^{10}$). St. John represents that both the vision and the voice were meant in the first instance for the Baptist alone, and that *he* imparted the secret to the multitude. Here we have at least consistency, for from that moment on, the people are divided by the question whether Jesus was the Christ or not. Viewing the Gospel narrative as a whole, it must be confessed that St. Mark's account (which St. Luke follows), if not demonstrably true, is at all events the most elegant; for it does not render superfluous the disclosure at the Transfiguration, ' This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him.' St. Matthew has condemned this in advance as a mere repetition, and St. John is more consistent in omitting it.

I feel no difficulty of a theological sort in admitting that this voice was Jesus' call, his first clear call to the danger and dignity of Messiahship. But I see great difficulties of a psychological sort confronting the belief that Jesus then for the first time knew God as his Father.

¶ 4. The Temptation.

Mk $1^{12, 13}$. **Then the Spirit drove him at once into the desert.** $^{13}$ **And he remained in the desert forty days, and Satan tried to tempt him there; and he was with wild beasts, and angels waited on him.**

' *Driven* by the Spirit ' is a strong expression. St. Matthew says simply that Jesus ' went ' into the desert, and St. Luke that he ' was ' there. ' Driven ' would seem an unacceptable word if we were given to suppose that the compelling Spirit was alien to his spirit. But in one of his parables (Mk $3^{27}$) we can clearly read his *eagerness* to combat and vanquish the Adversary of men: ' No one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man; then he can plunder his house.'

That Jesus occasionally felt a pressing need for solitude is several times attested in the Gospels. This may have been such an occasion ; but with this difference (as St. Matthew expresses it), that he ' went into the desert *to be tempted* by the devil.' Jesus felt equal to the conflict. Commonly he regarded himself as the aggressor: in this case he expected attack.

' Temptation ' is *trial.* God is said to tempt men. And when Jesus (according to Lk $22^{28}$) speaks of his ' temptations ' as though they characterized the whole of his public life, he may have been thinking either of the trials his Father subjected him to, or of his conflicts with Satan. In neither case does the word imply the possibility of failure or defeat. ' Tempted like as we are (yet) without sin ' (Heb. $4^{15}$), while it explains a sympathetic understanding of our infirmities, does not denote weakness. Artists like to depict a haggard figure in the wilderness striving almost ineffectually to resist the suggestions of lust and ambition with which the devil overwhelms him ; and men have presumed to speak of Gethsemane as Jesus' ' weak moment.' The story as it is told in the Gospels does not give that impression. It represents Jesus as human, but not all-too-human.

But Satan on his part had good reasons for feeling confident of victory, for he, too, knew what is in man. Dostoyewski grimly attributes to the devil the complacent saying we like to quote from the Roman comedy : *Satanas sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto* (I am Satan, and nothing human is alien to me). In St. John's Gospel Jesus says, referring to his last trial, ' The Prince of this world cometh and finds nothing in common with me.' In this saying there is still a trace of the mythological form which Jesus liked and the Fourth Gospel endeavours to suppress. To speak in philosophical terms, which are more congenial to us as well as to St. John, this was Jesus' solemn and decisive *abrenuntio* of ' the World.'

' Wild beasts '—' one of the stage properties of the desert ' is Wellhausen's flippant remark. And with that he justly enough disposes of the notion that they are the stage property of the Second Adam. But it is a perfect

example of *Spitzfindigkeit* when, arguing from the tense, he says of the 'angels' that they waited upon him all the time, and not only at the end, as St. Matthew reports. For how long was the whole time in this condensed account? and what had the angels to do there if Jesus had no hunger? The angels, being evidently a vestige of the extended story as told by St. Matthew, are a sufficient proof that St. Mark knew it all—and preferred not to tell it. Why? His desire to condense exceedingly this introductory part of his narrative does not seem reason enough. Here (by way of exception) St. Mark's story of events is briefer and less vivid than St. Matthew's. But perhaps he did not regard this as a story, a narrative, an *event*. And perhaps with good reason. It is more like parable than history. Being a story of Jesus' solitary experience, and substantially of an inner experience, it could only be known if he told it and as he told it. The form of telling it was prodigious; but it is clearly in the *genre* of Jesus, and there are analogies in the Old Testament. Ezekiel also was carried to the Temple (all the way from Babylonia), lifted up between heaven and earth by a lock of his head (Ez. 8[3]). Jesus might well have told this story in such a form with the intent of helping his disciples to understand why he was what he was—the portentous man they obscurely felt him to be. A man who had his decisive conflict with the world behind him, whereas theirs (and ours) keeps always provokingly ahead—a running fight. A whole-hearted man, therefore, all of one piece, who did not need to learn and to grow because he was already complete. A man who knew no fear, no vacillation; who acted as if he controlled events and was not controlled by them; who had power over demons and healed diseases; who was austere and yet tender, in spite of his nearness seemed remote and detached, inspired an awe which repelled and yet attracted (like God), whose very meekness had the effect of majesty; who nodded to men, and they followed, knowing not who he was or whither he led them; who wherever he appeared provoked faith or . . . disbelief.

Jesus practised analytical psychology upon himself, and by this imagery he expressed the result.

We have not yet discovered a sufficient reason why St. Mark omitted the strange story of the Temptation. Perhaps Professor Meyer is in the right when he seeks to account 'parsimoniously' by *one* motive both for this omission and for the much more serious omission of the appearances of the risen Lord. He suggests that both were due to St. Mark's *dislike* for the uncanny, the eerie, the ghostly—or at all events his feeling that they were unappropriate in a document which was written for the many and might fall under hostile eyes. But it may also have seemed to him that this strange story, which in its time was useful to explain to the disciples this strange man, so far as he could then be explained, had lost its importance when Jesus was known to be the Christ.

# *PART 1*

## GALILEE §§ 2–5

Mk $1^{14}$—$6^{13}$

### Section 2. ¶¶ 5–11

### COMMENCEMENT OF JESUS' WORK

Mk $1^{14-45}$

¶ 5. The Message.

Mk $1^{14, 15}$. **After John had been arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of God, [15] saying, 'The time is fulfilled, God's Reign has drawn near; repent, and have faith in the Gospel.'**

This is the point towards which St. Mark has been hastening—the moment when Jesus stood forth to proclaim the Gospel. The line which St. Mark's eye follows (through the ancient prophets, through John the Baptist) barely grazes the Baptism and the Temptation, but here encounters its mark. So rigorously does this line prescribe the direction of St. Mark's interest that all which lay behind this moment in the life of Jesus is necessarily excluded from his story. *Nothing* in Jesus' earlier life is by Mark's silence necessarily excluded as *fact*; and many things which lay outside his field of attention may have been within his field of vision. St. Mark does exclude, however, the notion advocated by St. John's Gospel, that in Judaea, before returning to Galilee, Jesus became the centre of public interest, there began his work and gathered his first disciples. Even that is not excluded as a fact, but only as a fact which was known to St. Mark, the interpreter of St. Peter and the companion of St. Paul. St. Mark's story must have begun with Judaea if he had known that Jesus' work began there. Either

account might be true, but they cannot both be. I have no hesitancy in following Mark. St. Matthew is more precise in asserting that in Galilee Jesus' preaching 'began.'

'After John had been arrested.' This was the signal for Jesus to begin his work. That is what St. Mark meant to say, for in chronological data as such he shows no interest at all. St. Matthew more clearly expresses his meaning by altering the phrase to, 'When Jesus heard that John was arrested.' Jesus, for reasons unknown to us, recognized that *this* was his summons. Just this fact in itself—and hence Mark tells no more in this place. Later ($6^{16-29}$) he gives an account of John's tragic fate—which again was a signal to Jesus, an intimation that he too was to suffer like his forerunner.

Obedient to this mysterious summons Jesus returned to Galilee and began to preach. Equally mysterious to us are the reasons which led him *there*. For though Nazareth in Galilee was his home (Mk $1^{9}$), if not his birthplace, he did not (according to Mark) at once go there, and at all events he did not stay there. One would naturally think (as St. John did) that Judaea was the proper place for the Messiah to begin his work. Besides, Galilee was in Herod's jurisdiction. Galilee! and at the very moment when Herod the King had suppressed a bold preacher! Both the time and the place seem ill chosen. Clearly they were not chosen by any reckoning of human expediency. Neither then nor later was Jesus' programme based upon or even influenced by current events as such. It was not the programme of a judicious preacher, of an astute reformer, or even of a prophet. It was the Messianic programme, and it was enough that Jesus knew how to guide himself by the Messianic portents. The first was the arrest of the Baptist, and Jesus knew that 'the time is fulfilled.' 'Fulfilled' is a word full of mystery.

'The Gospel of God.' That is what Jesus preached. But it is St. Mark who calls it by this name, and the phrase is characteristic of St. Paul. It means glad tidings *from* God. But I hesitate to translate it in that way because it is also *about* God, about God's Reign, about what God will do because he is what he is. The ambiguity of the Greek genitive is often a real *ambi*guity, which does not require

the absolute exclusion of one alternative but the embrace of both. As for the word 'Gospel,' I am fain to correct the abuse of it by a proper use, rather than retort to misuse by disuse; for we may be sure that the word always will be used, whatever the learned may do. English is the only language which has a word adequate to render *evangelion*. 'The Gospel of God'—the less familiar this phrase is, the more significant it is in this position, describing at the outset the character of all of Jesus' preaching. It is significant of the outlook of the Evangelist and of the Church, but even more strikingly significant of the attitude of Jesus. Neither at the beginning nor at the end did he preach a Gospel of his own—as one which originated with him or had his person as its object. The air of 'authority' which so promptly impressed the people (Mk 1[22]) did not have even the appearance of being the independent authority which the devil offered (Lk 4[6]), which Simon the magician claimed (Acts 8[9]), 'giving out that himself was some great one'—the sort of mastery which *we* heartily desire, beginning at so early an age that Dr. Adler discovers in infants a disposition to 'god-almightiness.' This is *the* original sin, and from this Jesus was free. He who alone was worthy of exercising independent authority 'took upon him the form of a servant'; though he was the Lord, he was not lordly but 'meek,' '*obedient* even unto death.' St. John interprets justly: 'I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me I speak these things' (Jn 8[28]; *cp.* 5[19, 27, 30]).

'God's Reign.' The genitive is *possessive* in the strongest possible sense. Here there is no ambiguity. Every other sense is absolutely excluded—and not least the sense we like to find in 'the Kingdom of God,' that it is an arrangement with which God has *something* to do. In this place I feel compelled to abandon the use of the familiar word 'kingdom,' because it suggests a political or social *arrangement* with which we might conceivably have something to do, some active part in bringing it about. 'God's Reign' is a more correct translation. And when we use that word we make it clear that our part can only be subjection to God's will, following upon penitence for our *insubordination* or 'disobedience,' which is our characteristic and original sin

(Rom. $5^{19}$). For who is there of us who could not be described at one time as a ' son of disobedience ' (Col $3^{6}$) and is not now a disobedient *son* ?

It is not easy to eradicate a notion of the Kingdom of God which for more than a generation has been inculcated by all our books of devotion, by popular instruction in Church and school, and by the overwhelming majority of theological writers. We have become accustomed to regard it as one of the inspiring traits of our religion that it summons us to co-operate with God in bringing about the ideal state of affairs which he is so eager to see realized but cannot accomplish without our help. We rightly regard this as a profoundly religious idea, and it possesses the further advantage of bringing religion into the closest relation with morality, for the Kingdom of God we are seeking to bring about involves the greatest good of the greatest number. Against this humane and nobly human idea perhaps nothing conclusive can be said except that it is absolutely not a Christian idea. But that fact is not conclusive, of course, to the multitudes of simple Christians who ignore it. Neither is it conclusive to the ' thoroughgoing eschatologists ' who maintain it ; for they are bold enough to affirm that, whatever Jesus may have thought and taught, Ritschl's interpretation of the Kingdom of God is the only one which is acceptable to the modern mind. That may be so. I understand very well how seductive this notion is to the modern mind ; for I have been seduced by it, belonging as I do to the generation that is passing away. But I have lived to see a generation which is only too manifestly not attracted by this or any other of our modern interpretations of Christianity. And it appears now that what we proudly called the modern mind was only the mind of the nineteenth century, not of the twentieth. This ' mind,' which was really the spirit of bourgeois society, Professor Tillich has described as ' the spirit of self-contained finiteness.' To this spirit, what notion of the Kingdom of God could be acceptable which was not itself essentially finite ? which did not deny the transcendental and the eternal ? which did not ignore the distance between man and God ?

It has become evident that, however *acceptable* this

notion may be, it is not *satisfying*. Our picture of the Kingdom of God is in a style of art which already appears antiquated. In place of the cosy realism of the nineteenth century an expressionist picture might make more appeal to-day—or perhaps the apocalyptic art of Blake, or perhaps the sober eschatology of Jesus! If the Kingdom of God means the gradual amelioration of human manners and morals—a many times secular evolution in which man is the conscious agent and God only the *élan vital*; or if, despairing of a radical reformation of the human heart, we conceive only of a far-off perfection of social arrangements which will avail to hold in check man's natural pugnacity and mitigate the consequences of his lusts; if we can trust that this will one day be made possible by the progress of science and its technical applications, what have we here but *Kultur—Kultur* raised to the *n*th power, let us say, yet still well within the limits of self-contained finiteness—and in 'this far-off divine event' what share can we personally have? Not radically different is the aspect if we stress particularly the necessity of spreading the Gospel throughout the world, for this aim is fatally confused with *Kultur*—with 'Christian' civilization. All of these are necessary aims and worthy of being pursued; but hardly to be pursued with a whole heart or without a plentiful dose of resignation, when we reflect that this is not our *summum bonum*, not a kingdom of God into which we can conceivably 'enter.' Such magnanimity is not impossible. It may seem only too human when we consider that our longing is 'not to be unclothed' (2 Cor. $5^4$). As disembodied souls we would prefer to haunt this familiar earth and to believe that life here with its well-known vicissitudes will go on for ever.

Only—'forever' is a word we cannot seriously use in this connection. Who is not familiar with the scientific dictum that this planet cannot provide conditions suitable for human life for ever, but only for some millions of years? *Then* what becomes of our Kingdom of God? And what becomes of any Kingdom of God which lies on this side of the resurrection of the dead, which has not reference exclusively to the expectation of being 'clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven . . . mortality

swallowed up in life,' which does not contemplate 'things which eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to believe'? Eternity is not *time* indefinitely extended. It is what surrounds the whole system of finiteness, limits it therefore, and threatens an end to time. Eternity is correlative with God—*i.e.* with a transcendent God. Creation is an essential doctrine of Christianity because it means a *beginning* and hence implies an *end*.

Why do we prefer nowadays *not* to use St. Matthew's expression, 'the Kingdom of Heaven'? For the reason that it is so plainly transcendental? so suggestive of that other-worldliness which has gone out of fashion? But, in fact, we do not altogether disuse it: rather we like to employ it as if it denoted something different from *our* Kingdom of God on earth—our unregenerated earth. All this *and* heaven too is our claim. Different, but not unrelated; for we like to think that our labour in behalf of the Kingdom of God on earth earns us our entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. So it is *we* like to think we can save our own souls—not by religious practices, which Charles Kingsley stigmatized as 'the back stairs of the universe,' but by altruistic sociological endeavour. How can we fail to perceive that both come to the same thing? Back stairs or front stairs—a trivial difference of architecture in our Towers of Babel! The scorn which is heaped upon the old-fashioned other-worldliness ignores the fact that in its classical expression it did not contemplate the saving of one's own soul but the hope of being saved. Its cry was, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

It is very plausible to suppose that St. Matthew, when he says 'Kingdom of Heaven,' uses precisely the word that Jesus used, conforming to the Jewish scruple against the use (with possible abuse) of the divine names. But in that case he means precisely what St. Mark means and what he and St. Luke and others *had* to say when they were writing for Gentiles. It means God's Reign, absolutely transcendental, yet not remote in time or space, but 'near,' even 'in the midst,' where Christ is present,—the eternal order breaking in upon the temporal.

The Evangelist evidently assumes that when Jesus used the term Kingdom of God on this first occasion he was speaking of something intelligible and familiar to his hearers, announcing as 'near' what they had long been expecting. St. Matthew may not have been wrong in attributing the same words to John the Baptist. Yet in the Old Testament Scriptures this term is not used to express the hope of Israel. Daniel, which is in reality the latest book of the Old Testament, furnishes the first suggestion of it. That book, which is a philosophy of history under the disguise of prophecy, contains in fact only one prediction, the promise of a kingdom (2[44], 7[22]) so unlike the frail or the cruel kingdoms of men that have preceded it that it can only be thought of as a kingdom of God. Though a good deal is preserved of the lively apocalyptic literature which filled in the period between Daniel and Jesus, the term kingdom of God is nowhere found. When therefore we confidently affirm that this word was familiar to Jesus' contemporaries, we are conscious of affirming something which has more truth than evidence on its side. But the expectation of the Christ (*i.e.* the anointed king) clearly implies a kingdom which in deepest reality is the Kingdom of God, though it also may be described as 'the Kingdom of his Christ' (Rev. 11[15], *cp.* Ephes. 5[5], Col. 1[13]). Jesus, who preached 'the Gospel of God' and not his own Gospel, proclaimed also God's Reign.

That is substantially what the Pharisees were expecting, however much they may have materialized the conception, confounded it with human polities, and exaggerated man's part in bringing it about. The Gospels furnish no basis for the representation of the 'Lives' to the effect that Jesus carried on a constant polemic with the Pharisees about the nature of the Kingdom of God, substituting for their false view what we are pleased to call a more 'spiritual' conception, by which we mean a conception which is altogether moral and social. And when we attach ourselves to the phrase of the Fourth Gospel, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' we mean only that it is not a kingdom like other kingdoms; and it is far from us to assert that it belongs to any other world than this familiar world in which we

now live. Our Kingdom of God is not only in this world but *of* it, and we are more in error than the Pharisees.

It is deeply disparaging to the boasted historical sense of our generation that it needed an ' eschatological *school* ' to awaken it finally to the apprehension that Jesus, as the Gospels unequivocally show, preached a Kingdom which is not of this world, which lies beyond the resurrection of the dead, and is altogether eschatological—*i.e.* coheres with the *last* events which are to mark the dramatic culmination of the long struggle between good and evil, light and darkness, which issues in the complete triumph of God over evil spirits and insubordinate men, ushering in the unobstructed and eternal rule of the good. It seems to be generally conceded now (and I wonder why not earlier) that this myth and the fantastic apocalyptic form in which it was expressed, which certainly did not belong to the early traditions of Israel, had its origin in Persia, in Mazdaism, ultimately in the prophet Zarathustra. In conceding this it may be supposed that we disparage eschatology and must abandon every item of it—the devil, the conflict, the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal Kingdom of God. It is therefore embarrassing to admit that Jesus found this myth congenial. Many have been unwilling to see any clear traces of eschatology in the Gospels ; others, who cannot ignore such traces, are inclined to ascribe them to the Evangelists ; and, paradoxical as it must appear, even the thoroughgoing eschatologists are not believers in eschatology—though Albert Schweitzer is labouring in Africa as a ' practising ' eschatologist.

Gulliver in his travels noticed the use of a bladder filled with dried peas for striking philosophical people over the head to distract them from their absorbing thoughts and divert their attention to some practical object. Such is the service the ' eschatological school ' has performed. They have proved that Jesus was an eschatologist, and thereby they have posed a problem which no one can now shirk with a good conscience. It is no longer disputable that Jesus conceived himself to be the Christ, the Son of God—and nothing in the whole range of apocalyptic eschatology could be more absurd than that. It is no longer a question whether Jesus conceived the Kingdom of God to be a moral

disposition in the hearts of men or an entirely supernatural event—and nothing could be more unacceptable to the 'modern mind' than the latter conception. To adjust ourselves again to these new-old conceptions takes time. Pure ratiocination accomplishes little in such a case, for what goes on within us is a living process which implies duration. Fourteen years ago, in my Introduction to Schweitzer's *Mystery of the Kingdom of God*,* I made a more or less adequate apology for apocalyptic eschatology, and more recently, in my Introduction to a Christmas sermon entitled *The Birth of the Divine Child*,† I expressed as well as I could my appreciation of myth in general, including the retrospective sort with which we are most familiar, and the prospective kind which we call eschatology. Now I might plead that my character of 'interpreter' exonerates me from doing more than merely witnessing to the fact that St. Mark was an eschatologist. But inasmuch as this involves the view-point of Jesus, I will say here that it no longer seems strange or repugnant to me to confess that Jesus also was an eschatologist. Indeed I can think of no other form of symbolical expression (*i.e.* expression by word or picture) which would naturally be so congenial to him as the eschatological myth which makes so much of the omnipotent God and his gracious intervention for the salvation of the world. Nor do I stumble any longer over the problem which vexed the earliest Church ('Where is the promise of his coming?')—the problem of an expectation unfulfilled. For the *nearness* of the Kingdom, which was Jesus' own personal addition to or application of the myth, seems to me a just expression, a profound apprehension of the eternity which surrounds us, from which we are separated phenomenally by time, but in which we existentially *are*.

For all that, I am well content to note how soberly Jesus employs apocalyptic imagery. Except for the so-called 'little apocalypse' which all of the Synoptists attribute to Jesus as one of his last utterances—but with so many variations that we are left in doubt whether more can be attributed to him than the prediction of the fall of Jerusalem —except for this, all is expressed so moderately that it was

* 2nd ed. A. & C. Black, 1925. † Longmans, 1926.

possible in good faith to deny any point of likeness between the Gospels and the prophecy of Daniel, the Book of Enoch, and the Revelation of St. John. But this is not to say that Jesus was something less than a 'thoroughgoing' eschatologist. He has conserved just those lines of the picture which were necessary to affirm the reality of Evil, the transcendency of God, the severity of God's conflict, the promise of a heavenly champion, the resurrection of the dead, the regeneration of the earth, and the everlasting reign of good. That is all so thoroughgoing and so essential that if you cut it out you have nothing left of Jesus. And equally you have nothing much left of him if you explain it all away: conceive of sin as mere defect of goodness; of God as the immanent soul of the universe; of Jesus as 'a religious genius'; believe in the immortality of the soul, the self-sufficiency of the visible universe, and a Kingdom of God which is only the evolution of the world's inherent capacities. What 'thoroughgoing' means—what it implies, what it excludes, and what it does *not* exclude—it will be our task to determine as we study the Gospel in detail. But this may be said at the outset and in view of the Gospel as a whole, that the recognition of Jesus' absorption in this heavenly range of ideas does not exclude the recognition that at all times he was sanely aware of what life is here in time and space, of what man is also (what man is !), and that he was free to react instantly and with his whole mind, with a perfect human sympathy, to every factor in his actual environment, and particularly to the needs (merely physical needs often, and often very trivial needs) of all the men and women with whom he came in contact. It is this instant and spontaneous response to every human appeal, every new situation, every change in the environment, which gives to the Gospel story an air of vivacity, the impression, one might say, of aimless exuberance. Jesus was always doing and saying amazing and unpredictable things—amazing especially to his own disciples. But behind this variable element was the Messianic problem, not determined by the inspiration of the moment, not alterable by any change of circumstance, rigidly determining his solemn progress from the Jordan to Galilee, from Galilee to the

Decapolis, and thence to Jerusalem and to Golgotha. This, however, was his secret, unknown to his disciples, and now only vaguely understood, after the event, by us.

There was one trait of the Persian myth which was accepted neither by Judaism nor by genuine Christianity. It was precisely that notion now so dear to us, that man can effectively co-operate with God in bringing about the divine kingdom. This seems to be traceable to Zarathustra himself. But at all events it was a prominent motive in the cult of Mithras which contended with Christianity for the mastery of the world. 'He was a soldier too,' is the refrain Kipling aptly invented for his Mithric hymn. For in this religion men were encouraged to address their god as *comes*—comrade at arms. Even Constantine struck a coin with the image of the sun god and the inscription *solis invicti comiti*. The god of Light had in fact a competitor—Darkness—of almost equal power; and in his uncertain strife he had need of human help. But the God who *is God* brooks no competitor and requires no comrades. It is impossible not to think that Isaiah was protesting against Persian dualism when he affirmed so trenchantly (45[6, 7]), 'I am Jahve, and there is none else: I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil: I am Jahve that doeth all these things.' And it is clear to me that Jesus' central faith that 'with God all things are possible' excluded not only the possibility of effective opposition on the part of Satan, but also the need of co-operation on the part of man. 'With man,' he said, 'it *is* impossible,' even to save his own life; 'but with God all things are possible,' even to the bringing about of his Kingdom. *That* God alone can do, and that God can do *alone* (Mk 10[27]). And as for Jesus himself, in spite of the familiar terms on which he lived among them in the days of his flesh, his disciples felt a sense of *distance* (Mk 10[32]). Even when they called him Master (Rabbi), and how much more *afterwards* when they knew him as Lord—'the Lord of Glory.' It is not from the Scriptures we draw our encouragement to address him as *Comes*—though 'he was a soldier too.' Kamerad! is not the cry with which we surrender ourselves to God or to Christ.

I do not wonder any longer that the form of apocalyptic eschatology which Jesus found ready to hand, as a tradition familiar to his people, was congenial to him and seemed a fit form for the presentation of the Gospel. For I know of no other pictorial form, and no other form of words, that so unambiguously describes God's transcendency and so wholly vindicates God's glory. If we strictly interrogate ourselves, we may perhaps find that here lies the chief reason of our distaste for real eschatology. A near pantheism or a vague mysticism hinders us from confessing unequivocally the transcendency of God, and our god-almightiness makes us unwilling to give God all the glory. In our eagerness to be helpful in bringing about the Kingdom of God we rob God of his glory. Nothing less than this ! though we do it with the noblest intention. And the Lord our God is a jealous God. Jealous not only of other gods his competitors, but of men who claim to be his helpers and companions at arms.

There is nothing essentially novel in this notion of the Kingdom of God which we are responsible for bringing about. Motives so human as those that move us have swayed men before in the long history of the Church. Very early, men felt inclined to pray that the End might be deferred, because they found themselves so comfortable in the Church—in the intervals between persecutions.* How much more was eschatology at a discount when Constantine had given peace to the Church and established a Christian Empire ! To the mind of Constantine and his obsequious bishops all prophecies were fulfilled in the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire. To the New Rome corresponded the New Jerusalem as rebuilt and adorned by Constantine—and that, as Eusebius the court bishop suggested, might be regarded as the ' New Jerusalem ' promised by the prophets. No wonder that the Revelation, the only apocalyptic book in the New Testament, fell into disfavour and, by the machinations of Eusebius, ran a risk of being excluded for ever from the Canon (Zahn). Never was there a time in history when it seemed so reasonable to believe that the Kingdom of God had come, established by human hands. It was only the

* *Cp.* Jesus' irony in Mk $10^{30}$.

true Christians that found themselves ill at ease in a world which Constantine had made so safe for Christianity—and by thousands they left this world for the desert of the Thebaid. They that do such things make it manifest that they are seeking a better country, that is, a heavenly. But before very long there occurred the most dreadful thing that can occur to a kingdom of God built by men: it was destroyed by men. The Goths sacked Rome—then St. Augustine, to re-establish men's shattered faith, wrote his *City of God* to prove that the Church (the one institution still standing) was a tolerable surrogate for the Kingdom of God; and the anchorites were content to come out of the desert, to live and labour as monks in a world which was frankly admitted to be bad. In the course of time men forgot how bad the world was; Humanism nobly affirmed that it was good; Romanticism, that it once had been good and might be again: but till our day men remained convinced that the Church is the Kingdom of God. Even now, when science and technic and the idea of progress have suggested a more ambitious kingdom in which men can co-operate, they remain blind to the fact that Church and Kingdom are never equated in the New Testament. Men were half conscious that they were bettering the Scriptures when they hailed *Kultur* as the fulfilment of prophecy. Then came the shock of the Great War, and the great defeat in which all were involved. Our new Kingdom of God was ruthlessly unmasked and seen to be only a new Tower of Babel. Only in 'God's own country,' in remote and prosperous America, does this idol still claim the allegiance of its devotees, and it may be suspected that even *there* not many delude themselves with the belief that it is the Kingdom *of God*. The war was not a 'sign from heaven,' it was only an earthly episode, and in no place was our civilization permanently destroyed; but the mere fact that it was threatened, the perception that it was not proof against time and chance, that the feet of our glorious image were 'part of iron and part of clay,' sufficed to bring our Tower of Babel toppling down about our ears. We had a sudden vision of cataclysms, of abrupt endings, which prompted a 'presentiment of the eternal in the temporal'

and brought again apocalyptic imagery into vogue, as the only language fit to express our vivid and disturbing experience of the malignity of men and the heartlessness of history. When now we discuss the ' religious consequences of the war,' only one thing is certain : that our soft religion does not grip the men of to-day. The well-known, the too-familiar God whose beauty we discover in the rose, his gentleness in the lamb, bears none of the marks of the ' numinous,' is not even *fascinans* (I am using, of course, the vocabulary of Professor Otto), and the *mysterium tremendum* is totally out of the question. Quite another, an ' unknown God,' we discover, like Job, in bitter and tragic experience, in behemoth-hippopotamus, in leviathan-crocodile, in the strident paradoxes of the zoological garden, in the

> Tyger, tyger, burning bright
> In the forests of the night,
>
> . . . . .
>
> Did he smile his work to see ?
> Did he who made the lamb make thee ?

' Clouds and darkness are round about him :
Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne.'

That a disquisition such as this would be out of place in a commentary, I admit ; and I can believe that many will think it superfluous in an *interpretation* of St. Mark. But St. Mark's is admittedly the most eschatological of our Gospels, and how can one approach it candidly before the prevailing prejudice against eschatology is encountered and allayed ? Besides, this is not a question which concerns only one of the Gospels or all four of them : it is central to the understanding of *the* Gospel. I adopt the words of Karl Barth (who is emphatically not of the ' eschatological school ') : ' A Christianity which is not altogether and utterly eschatological has altogether and utterly nothing to do with Jesus Christ.'

' Repent.' The Greek word (*metanoia*) means literally *change of mind*, but in this trivial sense it is used nowhere in the Scriptures. It is used only of the one change of mind which is of vital importance to man, namely, his change of mind with respect to God. And that implies a changed estimate of ourselves, of what we are in relation to God—

that is to say, briefly, what we *are*. Abstractly considered, a change of mind may be either for the better or for the worse. How ominous it is, how significant of Jesus' estimate of men, that he summons all men to change their minds, assuming that all minds are initially alienated from God, so that in every instance a change must be for the better. By the exhortation to repent, not only is our past behaviour called in question and, in view of our new attitude towards God, stigmatized as sin, but our *mind* is condemned, and we ourselves are shown to be sinners. 'Unless *you* repent, you will *all* perish likewise,' is what Jesus said (Lk 13[3, 5]) with emphatic reiteration. Jesus counted no man 'justified' before God, except a wretched tax-gatherer who knew what he was and cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner' (Lk 18[13]). And, in fact, why should a Saviour come, if men do not need to be saved? If only one man in all the world could save himself, then all men could—if only they would. We too often forget that men are human. Jesus' judgment of man was no different from that of John, who preached 'a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins' (1[4]). Only baptism is omitted from his programme—the *symbol*, of which repentance is the *substance*. St. Mark's Gospel from first to last makes no reference to Christian baptism, nor does the New Testament as a whole enable us to judge securely what importance Jesus himself may have attached to it.

'Have faith in the Gospel.' Here, as in Acts 20[21], repentance is regarded as the psychological *prius* to faith. That is its positive side. As a change of mind with respect to God (not mere shame or remorse for sin) it implies *belief* in him, and it is only a step further to the active attitude of *faith*. And faith in God implies belief in his message, the Gospel. Of course. When you trust a person entirely you believe what he tells you. But this is not at all what Jesus says. As usual, he is quite amazing. Here in his summary message he says nothing directly about God and nothing at all about belief. About belief, indeed, he never spoke in any place, but only about *faith*. It is a great misfortune, the cause of much misunderstanding, that our language has no verb to correspond with the noun faith. Even when we are thinking of faith and not of mere belief

(acceptance of a proposition as true) we have to say *believe*, unless we would use the circumlocution ' have faith in.' That awkward phrase I am constrained to use here because the emphasis here is extraordinary, this being the only place in the New Testament where the verb ' to have faith ' (*pisteuein*) is used with reference to the Gospel. More than that : there is no other place where the verb or the noun is used with the preposition ' in,' except with reference to *persons*, to denote the vital, social relationship of trust. From this we learn how essential is personal trust to the idea of faith. Theologians, indeed, when they are scrupulous are inclined to use the phrase ' faith *in* ' only with relation to the divine persons. It is not necessary that we should always be so strict. In fact, it is instructive to recognize that faith in God is generically the same as faith in man. But it is also well to recognize that faith (*pistis*) runs a gamut which culminates in God. For God alone is *pistos* —faithful, entirely trustworthy. Some would scruple to speak, as we do in the Creed, of faith *in* the Church, *in* the forgiveness of sins, *in* the resurrection of the dead, and *in* the life everlasting. But *this* is faith *in* the Gospel, in the realization of God's promise. And what is that but faith *in* God ? It is not merely one of the possible implications of faith in God : it is the only possible expression of it. Faith becomes an *act*. That is what faith *is* : confidence that God will do what his nature, power, and promise (goodness, omnipotence, truth) assure us that he must do. That explains the close relation between faith and hope. The Greek word for faith might be used by a Greek to denote merely belief in a proposition—a proposition which might refer either to past, present or future time. But Jesus so emphatically oriented faith towards the future, and so impressed this orientation upon his disciples, that even now faith is hardly conceivable to us without hope, that is, without some sort of eschatology. And this Jesus himself brought about. Many will be surprised to learn that in the Old Testament Scriptures man's relation to God was not commonly expressed by the word faith. And another thing in the Old Testament may surprise us. For us, religion is so associated with hope that we are incredulous of the

affirmation that the early religion of Israel knew no hope of life after death. But though the Old Testament never speaks of faith in God, there is *one* passage which speaks of lack of faith in him—and that in a passage which is very instructive to us here (Ps. 78[22]):

> Because they believed not in God,
> And trusted not in his salvation.

According to the character of Hebrew poetry, these two phrases are equivalent: faith in God is expressed by trust in his salvation; and trust in his salvation means what our phrase means, 'faith in the Gospel'; *ergo* Jesus did not leave out God when he summarized his message. Very far from it. For it was God's Reign he proclaimed, and Mark is certainly right in saying that it was God's Gospel. These are not two things but one: the Gospel is the glad tidings of God's Reign—the resurrection of the dead, the forgiveness of sins and Eternal Life. Faith in God can be expressed in no other way but by faith in the Gospel.

It is not impertinent to interject here a reflection about the Hebrew verb which in the Psalm just quoted is translated by 'believed.' It is *amen*—one of the few Hebrew words which we commonly use. Only we use it as a noun, and in that use it means *truth*. Yet it is something more than we mean by truth: not veracity merely, not merely an expression in words that adequately corresponds to reality, but reality itself. In that sense clearly the word truth is used in all the writings attributed to St. John. Hence Jesus is called the Truth, the Amen. And it is plausible to suppose that St. Paul was not exempt from this Hebrew influence. Hence he can use *pistis* in the sense of faithfulness—even of God's faithfulness (Rom. 3[3]). The verb *amen*, accordingly, does not mean intellectual assent to a proposition, but the apprehension of something that is real, that can therefore be relied upon, trusted. 'Faith is *substance*,' says the Epistle to the Hebrews. The New Testament word bears the marks of its origin. It is this which distinguishes the Christian *pistis* from the same word in classical Greek. It has been deprived of its intellectualistic character and has had impressed upon it the notion of

trust, with a direct reference to persons. Persons are in fact the most proper objects of faith—God most of all. But it is not improper—it is not even a different thing—to speak of faith in the Gospel ; for what is that but trust in God's salvation ?

In the course of this study we shall have frequent occasion to learn what Jesus meant by faith. But so much must be said in advance, all in one breath. And in advance we must dispose of the question whether Jesus spoke of *fides qua creditur* or of *fides quae creditur*—the faith *by which* we believe or the faith *which* we believe. I say, ' dispose of ' this question, for I have no intention of deciding it one way or another. It is not a real dilemma. My father stood stoutly for *quae* and I at one time for *qua*. Both of us were right and both were wrong—so far as concerns the use of the word faith in the Synoptic Gospels. We cannot deny that faith is in some sort a human quality, if we admit that trust is a prominent factor in it, if we think of it as correlative with hope, and if we speak of fear as its opposite (Mk $5^{36}$). Being human, it is soulish, and we must trust the psychologist to tell us what it is—this faith *by which* we believe. Much to our enlightenment he is able to inform us that it coheres with one congruous range of experiences, namely, with the expansive experiences of love, hope, trust, courage, belief; and that it cannot co-exist with the opposite range represented by hatred, despair, distrust, fear, and unbelief. But that is about all he can tell us. He cannot tell us how we can get faith (unless it be by practising the correlative experiences), nor can he disprove St. Paul's assertion that faith in the Gospel is ' the gift of God.'

So much for the *fides qua creditur*. We *could*, of course, use the word to denote merely an inward experience, without an object even so much as conceived—a half-physical *élan*, like courage. That we are inclined to do this (in spite of the fact that love, hope, trust, and belief suppose definite objects) is due to the blight that Schleiermacher cast over the nineteenth century, not so much by reducing religion to experience (which is plausible enough) as by confounding religion with faith. Inasmuch as our business here is simply to inquire what Jesus meant, and as he has nothing at all

to say about religion (except in his drastic comment upon the cleansing of the outside of the cup or the platter, and such-like practices), we have only to ask what he meant by faith. And here at the outset it is evident that he means something that has an object: it is 'faith in the Gospel.' And the Gospel is not something that wells up within us (a mystical fountain of knowledge), but a *revelation*. It is God's salvation, revealed of old in the prophets and now in a Son (Heb. $1^{1,2}$). But we must beware of being carried too far by the intellectualism of the theologians. The Gospel is not merely a series of propositions proposed for our assent or acceptance. Something like that is meant by Jude 3, 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints'; and that is one of the marks of the lateness of this Epistle. The objective use of the word faith which we find in the Acts and in St. Paul hardly goes so far as that. At any rate, nothing of the sort is to be found in the Gospels. Not in St. John, for he avoids the use of the noun and by using only the active verb 'to believe' he excludes the notion of a faith which is purely objective. And in the Synoptists faith is used in a sense which is clearly dynamic, never merely static. No one can suppose, for example, that when Jesus reproached his disciples for having 'little faith' he desired that they should add to their too scanty repertoire of theological propositions. How many angels can stand on the point of a needle? and how many propositions can be packed in a faith which is no bigger than a grain of mustard seed? The unique construction we have here in our text ('have faith *in* the Gospel') expresses clearly the element of trust—a quasi-personal relation to the Gospel. Where that is present, faith is in some measure implicit. But what is implied in it is never obscure even when Jesus speaks of faith absolutely, without express reference to its object—as when he says, 'fear not, only believe.' The object is God—his goodness, his might, his promise—in short, the Gospel. For all that, faith is subjective. It is an attitude—*our* attitude. An attitude toward God first of all, but also an attitude toward the world—an attitude toward the world which we could not assume without faith in God.

It is significant that Jesus proclaims *God's* Gospel and does not set *himself* forth as the object of faith. This would hardly need to be remarked upon if we had only the Synoptic Gospels. But the Gospel of St. John represents that from the very beginning Jesus pointed to himself as the object of faith—the Baptist having already pointed him out. That is an interpretation from the point of view of the Church, long after the Resurrection. And as an *interpretation* it is justified. Jesus *was*, and knew himself to be, provocative of a crisis in the case of every man that approached him. Men did not know that they were passing a definitive judgment upon themselves by their attitude toward Jesus. They recognized, it is true, that he spoke with an assumption of authority (Mk $1^{22}$) which was actually obeyed by evil spirits (Mk $1^{27}$) ; but his title to authority Jesus did not reveal (Mk $11^{27-33}$). Nevertheless, though Jesus did not tell men what they ought to believe about him, he conceived that they ought to have faith in him (*i.e.* trust him implicitly, with some vague apprehension of an emergence of the eternal in the temporal)—if only they were good physiognomists, or would consider the character of his words and the quality of his deeds (Mk $3^{22-30}$). And, in fact, men followed him without knowing who he was. But not without *acquaintance*—personal, intimate, and secure, as they must have thought when they followed him through privation and danger. Without knowing anything about him they knew *him*. A single deed of his, a word, a look, might suffice to establish such acquaintance —if it was only, ' Zacchaeus, come down.' Thus it is, if at all, that Jesus can be known to us. It is thus that we commonly learn to know men—by a subtle, unconscious art of physiognomy. We have never learned to know a living man by reading his biography, and we are absurd in demanding a biography (a ' Life ') of Jesus before we can feel acquainted with him. We have the Gospels—short stories of some of his words and deeds—and that has hitherto sufficed for all who have followed him. We have all that the earliest disciples had, except the sight of him —and ' blessed is he that hath not seen and yet has believed.' We have an advantage over the early disciples, for we know

now what Jesus held himself to be, what the Church also has discovered and acclaimed in him ; before knowing him we know his secret, for in some fashion or another it is betrayed by the first sentences of every one of the Gospels. With good right, therefore, Jesus can expect us to recognize him—as promptly as did any of the men who followed him in Galilee. And for us, too, every encounter with Jesus is our crisis.

It is clear enough why Jesus did not require of his disciples any particular *belief* about him—before his secret was disclosed. But it must seem scandalous to us, if we take note of the fact at all, that he requires no *belief* about God but only *faith* in him. He does not urge men to believe that God exists, nor does he argue to prove it. In the Gospels we find neither the cosmological argument, nor the ontological, nor the teleological—all the elaborate apologetic is lacking upon which we spend so much effort . . . all in vain. Why ? Perhaps because Jesus conceived that men did not have to be introduced to God—the God who created them, and in whom they live and move and are. They needed only to be *reminded* of him ; and he was a constant reminder —by what he said, by what he did, by what he was. Moses anticipated the danger that men ' forget the Lord ' (Deut. $6^{12}$), and St. Paul is very clear about the matter (Rom. $1^{21-28}$), explaining all the aberrations of paganism by the fact that men ' did not think fit to retain God in their knowledge.' It is a positive will-to-forget, the will to *dis*believe. And no wonder, for this is man's only refuge from God—unless he will flee *to* him. On such forgetfulness as this Freud's psycho-analytical studies of memory throw a searching light.

Faith in the Gospel ! That is what Jesus required. But how prodigious a thing that is ! It is so much easier to believe in Jesus—even to believe in a Christ after a sort. But not in a Christ who is a part of such a Gospel ! What almightiness it supposes in God ! Perhaps that is what we find most difficulty in believing—and therefore are inclined to substitute for Jesus' Gospel something easier, something that man himself might be able to bring about. ' The social Gospel ' is such a substitute. That people ever did believe

in the Gospel proclaimed by Jesus is proof of his amazing 'authority.' And even his personal authority was not enough to beget in men 'lively hope'—a sure and certain hope. It was God who begat that—by raising him from the dead.

Another long disquisition is now ended, and again I have to apologize. All this about so small a word as faith! But how can one approach the Gospels without first learning the vocabulary? And how many are there that know the vocabulary of the Holy Ghost? I must insist upon this knowledge as a necessity because I believe in the *verbal* inspiration of the Scriptures. I mean by this that the *words* most of all are inspired. This is the sort of inspiration St. Paul claimed for himself along with the other Apostles, though he claimed no other sort of inspiration: 'We speak not in words which human wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, interpreting what is spiritual by spiritual words' (1 Cor. $2^{13}$). Fortunately the criterion of *inerrancy* cannot be applied to words: we can say of them only that they are significant, rich in spiritual meaning; and it behoves us to learn their meaning if we would know anything of the Gospel. It is all the more important to insist upon this in an age which is so careless of the proper use of words that we are in danger of transmuting Christianity into something totally new and strange, without being in the least aware of the difference. Being tenacious only of 'the *form* of sound words,' we are content to hear them pronounced and indifferent to the suspicion that they have been evacuated of their meaning. We are not indignant even when we discover the trick. Schopenhauer was an optimist when he affirmed that 'no man will palm off an empty nutshell upon himself.' It is evident that many who pass from Christianity to Christian Science are unaware that they have gone to the opposite pole—where God is not God, Christ is not Messiah, sin is not sin, repentance is only a change of mind, faith is not faith, God's Kingdom is not God's, the Spirit is not the Holy Ghost, and salvation is self-help.

This extreme instance, and by the enumeration of only the words we have encountered in the first fourteen verses

of this Gospel, may suggest how far we have all wandered in this direction or in various directions. Still more devastating is the impression made upon us when we reflect upon the abuse of other key-words of the Holy Scripture. They would be more honoured by disuse, we must think. Prayer becomes a method of self-suggestion, resurrection of the dead means merely the immortality of the soul, regeneration is a psychological development, atonement becomes at-one-ment (banishing the *distance* between man and God), grace means an infusion of the divine substance, and justification means . . . simply nothing at all.

It is time to call a halt. We are anchored to the genuine tradition not by mere vocables, but by *words* apprehended in their true meaning. And more by the words than by the sentences of Holy Scripture. I do not know if any prophet or apostle ever framed an infallible sentence. At any rate, we infallibly misunderstand the sentences if we do not know the words. My revered instructor Hermann Cremer regarded the significant words of the New Testament as the language of the Holy Ghost. His *Lexicon* has lately been revised in conformity with our new knowledge of colloquial Greek (the *koine*) and the discoveries of the 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule.' But in my judgment nothing new has emerged to render his point of view antiquated. The language of the New Testament—its vocabulary, grammar, and syntax—was of course not created out of nothing, and to my mind it implies no disparagement to prove that some of its key-words have had a history in religions far remote from Israel. The alternative to a language which grows is a language mechanically manufactured (like Esperanto, for commercial use) without ethos, and lacking all the pathos of man's agelong ardent quest of God. It might rather be thought providential that the religious syncrasy of the antique world provided a vocabulary universally understood, which the Church could mould into an apt medium for the revelation with which it was entrusted. What all men everywhere had longed for, *that* the Church had to offer, and it was offered appropriately in the very words which had been coined to express the universal longing. That these words were remoulded is incontestable. The

image and superscription were faint on these coins when the Church minted them afresh.

If the *Church* did this, what is the use of talking about inspiration and the Holy Ghost? For us, that is only another way of saying that *man* did it—in General Convention, or Convocation, or General Assembly, or by some other parliamentary device for registering the will of the majority. Evidently that is not the way it was done. At any rate I do not have to argue here what 'the Church' means, for this word does not occur in St. Mark's Gospel. We will all agree that the making of our religious language was spontaneous. The old words gained new weight and meaning by reason of a new religious experience. So I should say, if I were not rendered cautious by beholding what wonders can be worked with the word 'experience.' Does this phrase simply mean again that *man* does it? and that there is no need of any Holy Ghost? no transcendent sense attaching to 'inspiration'? and no sense at all to 'revelation'? In fact, the Holy Ghost cannot but seem superfluous so long as we regard ourselves as so many holy ghosts, self-inspired, and able, by appropriate mystical methods (if the thing were worth so much trouble), to descry in the depths of our own being God's nature and God's eternal purpose. Doubly superfluous in our day is the Third Person of the Trinity, for we have abolished the distance between the world and God and have come to think of him as nothing else but a Holy Ghost, residing in us as he does in everything. Till we become aware that man is man and that God is God, till we have re-established the boundaries and reinstated the distance, we shall not again be able to appreciate the need for the Holy Ghost, for divine inspiration, and for Biblical revelation.

Rather than stop to apologize for this too long apology I pass on to the next word of our text.

'The Gospel.' About the meaning of this word we have already had occasion to say all that strictly needs to be said. It is the summary expression of the good tidings of God's gracious purpose to save men. God's Reign is its theme. But 'tidings' from where? what is the source of the Gospel? No man will say to-day that it is an apprehension

within the reach of Natural Religion. But can we declare with better reason that the Gospel wells up mystically out of our own inner being? The Gospel is not an expression of our need, but the disclosure of God's purpose. How else could it come but by *revelation*? Take it or leave it. You will understand now why I think it preferable that we should reject the Gospel as a whole rather than piecemeal—discard it (if such must be our fate) knowing what we discard, and knowing *that* we discard it.

'The time is fulfilled, God's Reign has drawn near, repent and have faith in the Gospel.' According to St. Mark this brief sentence represents the substance of Jesus' message to the world; and if his preaching was not limited to this formula, we are given to understand at least that it was short. We have good reason then for weighing every word of it. When we weigh the word 'preaching' we realize that it does not fit in this connection. In fact Jesus never preached, and though we may properly enough say that he taught, we cannot but feel that the title of 'teacher' was hardly appropriate to him. Rabbi (*i.e.* teacher) he was called both by the disciples and by the multitudes—because they did not know how else to classify him. It was only at the last they hailed him as a prophet (Mt 21[11]). But with so little system in his teaching we can hardly think that he regarded himself as a teacher or had a fixed purpose of imparting instruction. Almost everything that he said was occasional, prompted by an interest of the moment, and very often in reply to attack or controversy. We have extracted ample instruction from his parables by allegorizing them; but in reality they were most of them meant only to call attention to the nearness of the Kingdom of God. At an early time collections were made of Jesus' sayings, with little or no reference to the occasions which prompted them. The sayings themselves suffer somewhat from this omission, yet we may be grateful that they are preserved by Matthew and Luke, who used one or more of these sources and combined scattered sayings in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' Nevertheless we like to represent that, at least, Jesus taught the Twelve Disciples in a systematic way—a course of esoteric instruction, as even the

Evangelists hint (Mk $4^{10-20}$), though they give as an example only an evident psychological reflection. We must be half aware that this is an invention. The intimate followers were called 'disciples,' after the fashion of the rabbinical schools: that means *learners*, and doubtless they learned much from Jesus. But how could he give them systematic and comprehensive instruction while he was hiding from them the principal thing they needed to be informed about for their future ministry as Apostles—the mystery of the Kingdom of God and the secret of Jesus' Messiahship? The word we translate preaching means heralding, and Jesus' message was a herald's cry—a cry of warning like the Baptist's, and a promise of peace. I have no difficulty in believing that it was as brief a cry as St. Mark represents. How often it was repeated in these exact words we do not know. It would seem as if once would be enough at Capernaum, where his every word and act thenceforth substantiated the initial proclamation. The disciples proclaimed the same message throughout Galilee (Mk $6^{12}$; Lk $9^{2-6}$). Mark says only that they 'proclaimed that people should repent'; Luke says that they were sent out 'to proclaim the Kingdom of God' and that what they did was to proclaim 'the Gospel.' It all comes to the same thing, for the exhortation to repent implies the Kingdom, the nearness of which they attested by healing diseases and casting out demons. And what else could these uninstructed men preach but just this? Perhaps Jesus did not need to repeat this message often after his first tour in Galilee ($1^{38, 39}$). Once started, the message travelled from mouth to mouth; it preceded him even to Jerusalem; so that wherever he went he found, and did not need to arouse, a lively expectation of the coming Kingdom.

This brief summary of Jesus' message—brief but perhaps not abbreviated—I am inclined to regard as a 'pillar passage,' and for that reason I spend so much time interpreting it. The phrase, as everyone knows, is Schmiedel's, and was applied by him only to the few passages which express a view uncongenial to the Evangelist and the Church of his day—like Jesus' confession of the limitation of his knowledge (Mk $13^{32}$). This criterion was proposed

with the laudable intent of saving some fragments from the general wreck of the Gospel history which an unbridled criticism seemed then to threaten. It is a convincing criterion, but it evokes little interest now when so much more is generally conceded; and I cannot get it through my stupid head (as a Chinese sage might say) why the precisely opposite criterion is not as persuasive, why we may not regard as pillar passages such as represent the concordant belief of the Church in the earliest time. One might hesitate to accept that criterion because it proves so much—pretty much all that the first three Gospels relate, and a great deal more.

Yet that is the presumption with which I approach the interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel. I presume that it is authentic history, and only where internal evidence suggests error or misunderstanding do I relinquish that persuasion. Nowadays many indifferent critics go as far as that. It is generally conceded that this Gospel is our earliest, written not much later than the year 64 (that is, soon after the martyrdoms of St. Peter and St. Paul), that the author was that John Mark, a Jerusalem Jew, who as a young man had witnessed the Lord's death, was a companion of St. Paul at the beginning and at the end, and in the meantime had served (according to Papias) as interpreter for St. Peter. We could ask for no better external authority. It is the sort of authority which commonly inspires us with confidence in an historical document. And it is no more than that: it suggests a high human excellence, historical accuracy; not the divine quality of infallibility. St. Luke and the author of the Gospel known as St. Matthew's showed how highly they prized this document by incorporating it almost entire in their Gospels—and showed by their frequent corrections of it that they did not regard it as sacrosanct and infallible. Only as we go on to study the story in detail shall we be in a position to judge whether its internal authority corresponds to the favourable impression we start with, and in particular whether it is plausible to believe that St. Mark (as tradition recounts) derived much of his information directly from St. Peter. But here we may weigh the fact (for fact it is by nearly unanimous

consent) that where Matthew and Luke differ from Mark (that is, presumably, have altered his text) it is almost always Mark that is right. Weighing this fact, we feel first of all how scandalous it is that they should differ. For when we know that St. Mark furnishes all that is common to the three Synoptists (all the narrative and many of Jesus' sayings), and that the other sayings common only to Matthew and Luke are derived from another source (arbitrarily denominated ' Q '), we can no longer argue that we have a three-ply cord which cannot be broken, three independent witnesses whose discordancies in details of slight importance only enhance the convincing effect of their substantial concord. That argument, if it is still used anywhere, is used disingenuously. It is still reasonable, however, to assert (with the same effect we aimed at with the argument now discarded) that all the traits added to the picture by Matthew and Luke, and particularly all the sayings of Jesus which they record, are perfectly congruous with the account of Mark—as, for example, the speeches in the Fourth Gospel are not. So all is not lost. Far from it —if only we have courage to grasp the nettle firmly in order to gain a fair compensation for what we have lost. We have to recognize that there are real discordancies between the Synoptists (not merely differences in literary taste), and that when Matthew and Luke alter Mark's text with the intention of altering the sense, it is Mark's Gospel that proves the more authentic and original. Though this may seem to be negative criticism, it comes in the end to a very positive result. For considering the age and the general reliability of the two Gospels which we in a measure disparage by this comparison, we get a very high impression of the antiquity and worth of Mark's account. As we proceed we shall have many occasions to test this statement ; and although the judgment one forms on such considerations as these is determined by a sense for reality which cannot be clearly formulated, I believe that to most persons the cumulative effect of the comparison will be convincing.

This is dull reading, and I apologize to myself for writing it, for I have a high distaste for ' apologetics.'

If pretty much the whole of St. Mark's Gospel can be

shown to be so reliable, how is this which I venture to call a pillar passage specially distinguished as trustworthy? Why, precisely by Schmiedel's criterion. It is the most thoroughgoing eschatological passage in the Gospel—the summary of Jesus' message expressed in terms which suggest nothing but eschatology. And St. Mark's own interest was certainly not so thoroughgoing. His is the most clearly eschatological of all the Gospels. But when I say this I do not assert very much. For if the thing were really clear—if it were a character which the Evangelist himself had intended to impress upon the narrative—it could not be so commonly ignored. It is clarity discovered through a veil—and the veil is the Evangelist's indifference. St. Mark is certainly at no pains to point out the eschatological character of Jesus' sayings, and it seems as if in recording them he was sometimes more faithful than he knew how to be. Jesus' outlook he could not altogether understand. And no wonder, for in the Church the whole perspective was changed. It could not but be changed by the Resurrection. Then Jesus was known to be the Christ and he was expected to come again. But in the days of his flesh Jesus was not recognized as the Christ, and what he led men to expect was the coming of the Son of Man. That St. Mark has preserved, with very few blurs, the traces of this earlier perspective which he did not clearly understand, is the most impressive proof possible of the authenticity of his story. And no part of the story could have been stranger to the Evangelist than the summary of Jesus' message. After that beginning Jesus did not often say anything that had an explicit or an exclusive reference to eschatology. In what he says and in what he does he hardly makes the impression of a man who was 'interested in eschatology,' but of an eschatological man whose face was steadily set towards the last day.

If we have then good reason to believe that this summary of Jesus' message really summarized it, what becomes of the 'fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man' which we insist upon regarding as the central theme of the Gospel? Jesus did not include it in his summary. May we claim then that it belongs in a place close to this, or that it is Jesus'

later formulation of the Gospel? But Jesus did not formulate this phrase, nor did he ever bring these two notions together. It is our formulation and our idea; and if we prefer it to Jesus' Gospel, it is because it is *not* eschatological. 'Fatherhood of God' appeals to us because it abolishes distance. Jesus' term 'Father in heaven' is a word of infinite distances. What is stressed in the summary is not God's fatherhood but his *sovereignty*—God is King and his Reign is near. As for man's brotherhood, that too is included—but not in the sense that is dear to us. Jesus required *all men* to repent, implying that all are sinners. That is the thing that really unites men—as death is the thing which levels all inequalities. That is the 'touch of nature' which 'makes the whole world kin.' 'Touch' (pronounced tush) is equivalent to the French *tache* and means the dark stain of our nature—original sin. This is what Shakespeare meant to say, as Dr. Furniss explained to me many years ago. This, instead of our dear sentimentality! If men will not recognize their brotherhood on this basis, they will never really know any brotherhood. And if from this low level they do not lift up their cry on high to Abba, the Father, they will not really know what it is to be sons of *God*.

It cannot seem superfluous to spend so much time studying the Gospel Jesus proclaimed, if we reflect that we shall not hear it again to the end of St. Mark's story—not again so loud and full and clear.

And still it remains for us to compare Jesus' Gospel with St. Paul's. An odious comparison; but it is forced upon us by Liberal Theology, which has invented another dilemma, 'Jesus *or* Paul,' suggesting that Paul, not Jesus, was the founder of Christianity as we know it. These people with their invented doubts and dilemmas remind me of the coarse verses written by the author of *Hudibras* in derision of the Puritan preachers:

> They would raise questions dark and nice,
> And after solve them in a trice;
> As if divinity had catched
> The itch on purpose to be scratched.

Or, like a mountebank, would wound
And stab themselves with doubts profound;
Only to show with how small pain
The wounds of faith are healed again.

This was not quite fair to the Puritans: neither does it quite apply aptly to the modern liberal theologians. They do not show us how to heal these wounds again, and the dilemmas they invent so easily cannot be solved in a trice. But *this* question, though it is indeed dark and nice, *can* be solved without quibble or subterfuge, and the effort we are obliged to make is full of instruction.

It is asserted that St. Paul preached a Gospel substantially different from that of Peter, James, and all the early disciples. Worse than that—it was almost the polar opposite of the Gospel Jesus proclaimed. For whereas Jesus was simply the proclaimer, in St. Paul's Gospel he was the theme, the *subject* of the proclamation. That assertion is very specious, and it is in large part true, and it seems therefore very serious.

When St. Paul several times says '*my* Gospel' (as Jesus never did!) he seems to admit the difference—and glory in it. But it appears from two of these passages (Rom. 2[16], 16[25]) that the difference St. Paul had in mind had nothing to do with the substance of the Gospel, but only with its application. It was his peculiarity that he applied it to the Gentiles with the understanding that they might be saved without first becoming Jews. This apprehension he claimed to have had 'by revelation' (Gal. 1[11]). And what but a flash of revelation could have given him confidence to stand out alone against all? When he speaks, however, of the substance of the Gospel he says expressly that he received it (not by revelation but) by tradition, and as a tradition he handed it on to his converts (1 Cor. 15[3]). Note the passion and the irony with which St. Paul repudiates the notion that there might be 'another' and a 'different' Gospel (Gal. 1[6–8]; 2 Cor. 11[4]). Always and everywhere it was Paul's application of the Gospel to the Gentiles which was the matter of controversy, and it was that only—'the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles' (Gal. 2[2])—and in Jerusalem the only question raised was about the circumcision of his converts.

Commonly St. Paul speaks of 'the Gospel,' simply and absolutely. There was notoriously only one Gospel, and everybody knew from whom it came and to whom it referred. Several times it is spoken of as 'God's Gospel'; more frequently as 'the Gospel of Christ,' or 'of Christ Jesus our Lord.' There is the rub—it was not simply the Gospel Jesus proclaimed, but the Gospel about Jesus, including the proof that Jesus is the Christ (Acts $17^{2, 3}$). That is what Paul is blamed for. And, in fact, that is what he began to do while he was yet called Saul (Acts $9^{20, 22}$). But that is exactly what all Apostles did (Acts $5^{42}$, etc.), and their earliest disciples after them (Acts $8^{5}$): they all preached Christ. The same thing is meant when it is said of Paul that he 'preached Jesus' (Acts $9^{27}$). Of course. What else could they preach? And is not that what the liberal theologians want us all to preach? But the scandal is that St. Paul confounded this preaching of Christ with the Gospel itself. A scholar who makes this objection is in a humiliating predicament, for he betrays his ignorance. 'Preaching' does not mean *preaching*, in our sense, but *proclamation*; and in the New Testament, almost without exception, it is used absolutely in the sense of proclaiming the Gospel. Therefore to preach Christ, to preach Jesus, and to preach the Gospel mean all the same thing (Acts $8^{5, 35, 40}$).

Well, then, all the Apostles departed from the 'simplicity' of Jesus' Gospel; for Jesus did not preach Jesus. No, he did not: it would not have been in good taste, and it would have been senseless to do it. But it can be affirmed in all seriousness that Jesus preached *Christ.* If he preached the Kingdom, he preached the King, *i.e.* Christ. Under the mysterious designation of 'the Son of Man' he preached Christ crucified, giving his life a ransom for many, and he preached the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Mk $8^{31}$, $9^{31}$, $10^{33, 34}$). But that is precisely what St. Paul preached! —just what he proclaims as the core of his Gospel. We have studied in vain the initial proclamation of Jesus if we cannot now perceive how close akin to it was the proclamation of Paul, even in that passage (1 Cor. $15^{1-19}$) for which he is most strongly condemned. For to preach that 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that he was buried;

and that he hath been raised on the third day ; and that he appeared to Cephas *etc.*' ; and that in this lies man's hope of resurrection from the dead—that is to preach substantially the same Gospel Jesus preached, that is to preach the Kingdom of God.

But you cannot eat your cake and have it too. If you prefer to exclude from Jesus' Gospel every trace of eschatology, you will of course be able to discover in it no likeness to St. Paul's Gospel. That is the way men have invented the dilemma, ' Jesus *or* Paul.'

Yet, after all, there *is* a difference between the Gospel which Jesus preached and the Gospel as it was preached, not by Paul alone, but by all the Apostles. The brief proclamation which Jesus made at the beginning, and the expectations which he suggested later to his disciples, were evidently formulated against a background of apocalyptic fantasy ; whereas the apocalyptic interest quickly faded in the Church. Schweitzer remarks upon the paradox that it was Jesus himself who put an end to apocalyptic eschatology. The apocalyptic interest hitherto had centred in the Messiah —when he would come and how ; who and what he would be. Imagination had a free field for its extravagances. But its wings were clipped so soon as it was recognized that Jesus was the Christ—this simple man from Nazareth. Henceforth, to preach Jesus was to preach Christ ; and, according to St. Paul's feeling, ' to depart and be with Christ ' —beyond the resurrection of the dead !—means entrance into the Kingdom of God. Eschatology remained supernatural, but not for long apocalyptic. It was expected that Jesus would return in glory. His own words were remembered in this connection—' the clouds of heaven,' which the apocalypse of Daniel had suggested. But there was no temptation to fantasticate, seeing that it was *this same Jesus* that would come.

We have now had ample opportunity of learning what the Gospel is. But perfect knowledge is not even a first step in obedience to the Gospel of Christ. The devils also believe—and tremble.

¶ 6. The Call of the Four.

Mk 1[16–20]. **And as he passed beside the sea of Galilee he saw Simon and Simon's brother Andrew casting the net in the sea—for they were fishermen. [17] And Jesus said to them, 'Come along with me! and I will make you fishers of men.' [18] And at once they dropped their nets and followed him. [19] And going on a little further he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They also were in their boat, mending the nets. [20] And he called them at once, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went off after him.**

Here the Evangelist begins to be less concise, for here, as he feels, begins the story—and it is a *story* Mark proposes to write. Jesus' *sayings* were early collected and passed down by oral tradition. One of these collections (the source 'Q,' which Luke and the author of 'the Gospel of Matthew' made much use of later) was committed to writing about the time Mark wrote. It is commonly supposed that Papias had this document in mind when he spoke of a work entitled '*Sayings of Jesus*' which he attributes to Matthew the Apostle, and which therefore was probably written in the dialect of Palestine before it was translated into Greek. But, so far as we know, Mark was the first who essayed to write a narrative of events. Luke (1[1]) speaks of 'many' who had taken in hand to draw up a narrative founded upon the tradition handed down by the eye-witnesses who became teachers of the message; but whether the word we translate 'things' (*pragmaton*) denotes deeds and events is not perfectly certain. At all events he relied exclusively on St. Mark for the general course of events from the Baptism to the Burial. If he knew other narratives, he preferred this. Considering how obviously distinguishable are at least four of the sources which St. Luke made use of, we cannot but regard it as significant that even the acute criticism of Johannes Weiss does not succeed in convincing many that the 'original Mark' can be dissected out of the Gospel we now have. It seems as if it were all of one piece. There is nothing that clearly suggests the use of written sources except the duplication of the feeding of the multitude

*etc.* If we have reason to think that Peter was Mark's authority for any part of his narrative, we may be inclined to accept Papias' statement that he was his authority for much of it. This, of course, does not mean that St. Mark's narrative is as reliable as if it had been written by St. Peter. There is an incalculable distance between the eye-witness who was also participator in the events and the man who merely reports what this witness related. Nevertheless, I cannot agree with Wellhausen that the incidents recorded in this Gospel are none of them reported as an eye-witness would have related them—especially if one consider that Peter's stories must have become terse and brief if they were frequently repeated in public addresses and through the medium of an interpreter. At all events, no one will complain of Mark that his style lacks vividness and movement. Even if Peter was not the author of the First Epistle that bears his name, the expression, 'my son Mark,' conduces to confirm the tradition of an intimate relation between this disciple and Mark. But however that may be, few who were not companions of the Lord were in so favourable a position as was Mark for discovering the most reliable traditions current in the Church some twenty-five years after Jesus' death. But why say 'twenty-five years'? This John Mark was son of that Mary who was hostess of the Church in the earliest days in Jerusalem (Acts 12[12]); he was a nephew of Barnabas who was an apostle before Paul, and he accompanied these two apostles on their first missionary journey (Acts 12[25]); and though Paul was discontented with him at that time (Acts 15[37]), we find him later a trusted helper of that apostle in the days of his imprisonment at Rome (Col 4[10], 2 Tim 4[11], Philemon[24]).

Since I was a student of Christian archaeology, and saw the confirmation of Di Rossi's faith in obscure and slighted traditions, I have been inclined to believe that tradition commonly gives a more trustworthy account of ancient things than the scepticism of the cleverest head is capable of constructing some two thousand years after the event.

Here, where Peter comes into the story, begin the picturesque details which are characteristic of this Gospel. Two boats, the casting and mending of nets, father Zebedee

and the hired men—it may seem exaggerated to lay stress upon these few traits by calling them picturesque detail. Any narrative, we may say, if it is not too dull to read, must have such detail as this. But these little traits become significant when we note how frequently Matthew or Luke, transcribing Mark's story, omits one or another of them as unessential. Here St. Matthew omits only the 'hired men.' We do not know what St. Luke might have omitted, for he has suppressed the whole story in favour of a tradition which seemed to him preferable—and which certainly was not less picturesque, seeing that it contained the miraculous draught of fishes (Lk $5^{2-11}$). In this story, though all four 'followed,' Peter alone was called. It is notorious that the Fourth Gospel gives a totally different account of Jesus' first encounter with his disciples: they were attracted to him by the Baptist's testimony that he was the Christ, and after the unnamed disciple comes Andrew, with Peter emphatically third. I am glad it is not my task to harmonize these discordant stories. I reflect grimly that while the Fundamentalist is compelled to make the attempt, he is also debarred by his theory of inerrancy from carrying it out. The liberal 'Lives,' incongruously, are the harmonizers of to-day, seduced in this instance by the desire to find a psychological explanation of the disciples' willingness to follow. According to Luke a miracle accounts for it; according to John it is the impressive testimony of the Baptist: in either case the disciples believe Jesus to be the Christ before they believe *in him*. In this instance harmonizing is easy, if one feels free to ignore all contradictions; but it is won at the expense of losing the point which Mark is evidently intent upon making, namely, that Jesus was a compelling personality. 'Authority' is the word the Evangelist used in this connection, but, naturally enough, not in this instance. The authority of Jesus which deeply impressed people at the very outset of his work was not the official authority of the Messiah, for no one could then suspect that he claimed such a title; neither was it the authority of the miracle-worker, for (according to St. Mark) he had not yet performed a miracle; it was therefore sheer personal authority. When he first spoke in the synagogue

at Capernaum the people were astonished at his authority (1[22]), as immediately afterwards they were amazed at the authority with which he commanded unclean spirits and they obeyed him (1[27]). This last was not a miracle—that is, not any more of a miracle than his commanding human spirits to follow him, answered by their prompt obedience.

'At once' (*euthus*). This is one of Mark's favourite words—used so often that it gives an air of breathlessness to his story. It is clear in some instances that things did not move so fast as the word implies. We must often discount the word as a peculiarity of the author's style. But after all 'the style is the man'; and in this instance St. Mark certainly meant to represent that the first disciples obeyed Jesus' summons at once, though they did not know who he was, nor whither he was asking them to go. Here at the outset he strikes the key-note of his Gospel, and the whole picture he draws of Jesus is consistent with this beginning. It seems to me natural that St. Peter should recount in this way the story of his call and should remember it in this way—even if (according to St. Luke) he had seen Jesus before and had beheld the healing of his mother-in-law and various other works of healing, followed by the miraculous draught of fishes. For, after all, Jesus was essentially an unknown man, mysterious, incomprehensible, who called him away from his familiar life to go he knew not whither; and that he obeyed the summons must always have appeared to him amazing, a thing not logically justified, nor psychologically explicable.

To-day many yield to the authority of Jesus because they have been taught to believe in him as Christ the Lord. But even now men yield to him heartfelt obedience, while they do not know who he is and only feel the compulsion of his personal authority.

'Follow'—that is a word which throughout this Gospel is used in a practical and literal sense—not mystically, as of the *imitatio Christi*. To follow Jesus meant to accompany him as one of his intimate disciples. That necessarily implied the relinquishment of every other profession, of family, and of possessions. But it was not clear to the disciples at first that the path they had started on might

lead to martyrdom (14[31]), and that the impetuous following would slow down to a following 'afar off' (14[54]).

¶ 7. The Synagogue at Capernaum.

Mk 1[21–28]. **Then they went into Capernaum. And when the Sabbath came he taught at once in the synagogue.** [22] **And they were amazed at his teaching, for he taught them like one who had authority, and not like the scribes.** [23] **And just then there was a man in their synagogue under the control of an unclean spirit who shrieked out,** [24] **'What have you to do with us, Jesus the Nazarene? You have come to destroy us. We know who you are—God's Holy One!'** [25] **And Jesus rebuked him: 'Silence!' he said, 'and come out of him.'** [26] **And the unclean spirit convulsed him and went out of him uttering a loud cry.** [27] **And they were all so awed that they discussed it with one another, saying, 'What can this be? It is a new teaching with authority behind it! He gives orders even to the unclean spirits, and they obey him!'** [28] **And his fame at once spread in all directions through the whole neighbourhood of Galilee.**

St. Mark's favourite word 'at once' (*euthus*) occurs three times in this short passage, and in every case it causes us some embarrassment. In the first case it is asserted that on entering Capernaum with the four disciples (presumably immediately after their call) he 'at once on the Sabbath taught in the synagogue.' That could not be literally true, for no Jew cast or mended nets on the Sabbath. Hence in order to render the sense correctly we have to transpose the word 'at once.' In the second instance it is used to indicate that during this very meeting of the synagogue Jesus' teaching was interrupted by the shrieks of the demoniac; and to convey this sense one must use some such expression as 'just then.' In the third case, 'at once' is an obvious exaggeration, and were it not important to preserve the identity of the word, one would prefer to say that 'his fame spread *swiftly*.' 'Straightway' is the word used in our familiar English versions, but unfortunately it is antiquated.

This word occurs twelve times in the first chapter, which

means four times as frequently as in the Gospel as a whole; and that means that the Evangelist himself is in haste to finish 'straightway' the first portion of his narrative. Here he is obviously condensing with all his might, and perhaps unintentionally he gives the impression that everything narrated between the sixteenth verse and the thirty-eighth occurred within twenty-four hours—the first day at Capernaum. It is clear, at all events, that he means to describe a sample day—and he does it with impressive effect. Also with great plausibility. Nothing is related of this first Sabbath and the morning following which might not have occurred just as it is here told.

'Synagogue'—the most important and the most characteristic of the later institutions of Judaism. The meeting in the synagogue was an occasion for common prayer, but still more for instruction; and it was conducted with an informality which permitted any esteemed person to expound the Scriptures. It afforded an opportunity for Jesus to teach, as it did later for St. Paul and his fellow missionaries. Apparently Jesus availed himself of it only during the first days. Later he had ampler opportunity when people crowded about him every day and everywhere. Then, too, the opposition of the scribes must have rendered him unacceptable as a teacher in the synagogues. But Jesus had other reasons for frequenting the synagogue, which St. Paul did not have when the centre of gravity of the disciples' cult was in the Christian assembly—the Church and the Eucharist. Paul could lightly desert the synagogue when his missionary purpose was accomplished. Attendance was not required by divine law, for the Law was before the synagogue. It was on the same footing therefore as churchgoing. People attended the synagogue because it was a pious custom, because, as the one occasion for common and public worship, it fostered a sense of solidarity, and because it proved in individual experience good to be there. If the sermon was banal, there was opportunity for common prayer; and if that was merely formal, there was at least incentive for remembering God. What in the long run could be more profitable than that? No one could be more scathing than Jesus in denouncing the ineptitude of

rabbinical teaching, and none more trenchant in denouncing formalism in prayer. He called *that* hypocrisy, which means acting a part. And yet Jesus was a church-goer. He recognized that new wine could not be kept long in old wine-skins, and yet he expected his disciples to observe all the ancient pieties. He anticipated that his disciples would eventually be driven out of the synagogues, but he by no means counselled them to withdraw—he implied that they would be there to be driven out. It is not from Jesus we have learned to be dissenters, separatists, sectarians. Though he required of his disciples that their 'righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,' he was very far from encouraging in them the holier-than-thou feeling which has prompted all Puritan movements. Strangely enough, Jesus did not have that feeling himself, though he alone of all men might reasonably have indulged it. He was not too good to go to church, and of course he was not indifferent enough to neglect to go; therefore, though he was accustomed to pray alone wherever he could be apart, and though he was able to worship under the 'blue dome' the Father who clothes so wonderfully the flowers of the field, he remained a church-goer. It needs to be said further that, unlike many preachers, he did not frequent the synagogue only when he might expect to preach there himself, or to read the lesson, or to recite the prayers. When he went the second time to the synagogue at Capernaum (3[1]) he hardly could have known beforehand that there would be a man there with a withered hand who would involve him in a dispute which was more edifying than many a sermon.

'Authority.' We are not told what Jesus said in his 'sermon' on the first Sabbath at Capernaum. Naturally enough, for short speeches are more memorable than long ones. We can have no doubt that this was an interesting sermon, for of all the sayings of Jesus that are recorded not one is without salt. But we are told only of the *impression* it made. No one could fail to note the tone of personal authority—and all the more because they were accustomed to something so different. The scribes recognized only authorities who were dead, or who based their decisions upon

the opinions of ancient rabbis, which ultimately appealed to the dead letter of Scripture. Here at last was a living and quickening authority.

'New teaching.' When the meeting was broken up by the violent interruption of the demoniac the people got a deeper apprehension of this authority which had at once struck them in Jesus' words and manner. He presumes to order spirits about—even this unholy sort that is impervious to pity or reason or moral appeal—and these disobedient spirits obey. Exorcism was practised by the Jews, by the use of magical formulae; but Jesus had only to command. As the people discussed with awe this uncanny experience they hit upon the expression, 'new teaching.' That helps us to understand what was their impression of Jesus' 'authority.' 'New' (*kainon*) means not so much novel as fresh, spontaneous, original. Jesus was always spontaneous and original, even when he said nothing new; for *original*, in its proper sense, does not mean the same as novel; and because human souls are much alike, the effort to attain novelty destroys originality. To be original is not a thing to be attained, it is simply a thing to *be*. Jesus prized the old along with the new (Mt 13[52], *nova et vetera*). There is no indication that Jesus prided himself especially upon the novelty of his teaching, or indeed that he was aware of saying anything essentially new, except as he applied to *himself* what was said by them of old time, or sharpened the old moral obligation by reference to the crisis which the coming age of God's Reign was then bringing about. Certainly it would never have occurred to him to base his claim upon the novelty of his teaching. Who ever expected such things of the Messiah? And how preposterous to ween that this might avail as proof of divinity! Yet inconsiderate persons have been disconcerted by the assertion of Jewish scholars that everything Jesus said had been said by the rabbis before him. The best answer to that is the witty one of Julicher, that 'it is a pity they also said so much more.'

The picture we now form of the 'historical Jesus' exhibits clearly enough the traits of freshness, originality, and authority. But how faint must be this impression

compared with the impression made upon his contemporaries by the personal Jesus. For the historical Jesus as we are able to reconstruct him from the scanty data of the Gospels is very far from being the whole Jesus. We have a collection of some of his sayings and an account of a few of his deeds; but what we lack is almost everything that a physiognomist would rely upon for forming his judgment of a living person. The finest tact does not avail us if we lack contact. No written history can give us the impression which Jesus made upon the men who saw and heard him, who witnessed not only what he did but what he did *not* do, what he did *not* say, how he bore himself on every occasion, his every gesture, the timbre of his voice, the gleam of his eye. When it is a question of personal authority it is just these things that count. The historian cannot transfer to us the original impression, he can only tell us what impression Jesus made. We cannot suppose that the disciples were disposed to believe that Jesus was the Christ because he uttered the fresh and original sayings we read in the Gospels, or because in the end he made this assertion. They had something to go on which we have not—the direct impression of his person. That impression we indeed can have too, but not directly, only as the reflex of their faith, as the flame which was kindled by him and passed then from heart to heart. We have it in the Gospels—not in so far as they are historical documents, but in so far as they express the faith of the Church. The fullest and directest *consequence* of Jesus' life was not the Gospels (an historical account of him) but the Church (the life and faith of his disciples). If it were true that 'Christianity has never been tried,' and if it had not in some measure succeeded, we should be left without the securest proof that the historical Jesus ever existed. It may be said at all events that but for his death he never would have become historical. In the Church at large, as well as on the pages of the Gospels, the impression of the whole course of his life is determined by the fact that it was not brought to an end, but was abruptly cut short before it was fairly begun. Apart from the historical effect of his life as exhibited in the Church we can form no conception of the

religious personality of Jesus or of his real significance. The 'historical Jesus' as the foundation of religion is a very questionable and insufficient substitute for the Gospel 'that Jesus Christ is Son of God and Saviour.' And when the 'historical Jesus' is played off against Christianity and raised to the dignity of a dogma one finds one's self in the end compelled, like the old Rationalists, to eliminate everything that historically conditioned him. Then the poetic glamour is gone, and in place of the historical we have finally only the rational, which every man can conceive after his own fashion.

I have reason to fear that in the foregoing paragraph I may have said something dangerously liberal, for I have been quoting Wellhausen!

'Under the control of an unclean spirit.' I must first of all make my apology for believing this story. Not a shamefaced apology, as it must have been had I been writing forty years before this date. In making it now I have in mind chiefly those who are not marching in the van of their generation, and my apology might be arrogant. For my own part I have never been inclined to make experiments with spooks, but I have not shut my eyes to the experiences of others, and without seeking it intentionally, I myself have had experience of driving out evil spirits, which threw young men into convulsions as they went out. Moreover, I could hardly have been for twenty-five years a close friend of Elwood Worcester's without taking a sympathetic interest in psychical research and becoming familiar with the notion that an alien spirit can 'control' the human organism. This notion seems to me plausible *a priori* and apart from the evidence that may be adduced in support of it. But, of course, no conceivable amount of evidence would be convincing to one who has no place in his philosophy for spirits and does not conceive of the human body—along with all other living bodies—as formed and informed and normally controlled by its own proper soul. Perhaps I was early disposed to welcome such views by hearing oftentimes in my childhood strange stories from Dr. Nevius' book on demoniacal possession in China, read from the manuscript which was left for ten years in my

father's custody while the author hesitated to publish it. And well might he hesitate in those times, when men were incredulous of everything but the obvious. For that was the day of Huxley, not long before he engaged in his famous dispute with Gladstone about the Gadarene swine—a duel which was equally discreditable to both of the high contending parties, and which now seems as antiquated as any piece of mid-Victorian furniture.

I will not prolong my apology, for I am not eager to win any one over to my belief; and to establish the credit of St. Mark as an historian it is sufficient to affirm, what no one acquainted with the facts will deny, that just such miracles *do* happen (whether we like to call them miracles or not), that the *phenomena* ascribed by the Gospels to demoniacal possession and to the cure of it are facts perfectly well attested both in ancient and in modern times (whether we like that explanation or prefer to attribute them to hysteria). This is no excuse for the burning of witches, or for the popular ignorance which (not in Palestine alone) has been wont to attribute all sorts of insanity, and even all manner of disease, to the operation of evil spirits. But it is an observation which immensely enhances the credibility of the Synoptic Gospels.

Though we have not yet encountered an instance of Jesus' power to heal disease, this connection suggests the remark that in the generation last past Jesus' works of healing were reckoned among the miracles which do not occur. Their non-occurrence, as Matthew Arnold wittily said, was the only objection he had to miracles. At a time when all liberal-minded men discarded all the miracles related in the Gospels, it seems as if one ought to have regarded the Gospels as discredited *in toto*, and might not unreasonably entertain the doubt whether such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed. But by a miracle of human inconsistency most of these liberal-minded persons, while they repudiated as a tissue of lies most of the events related in the Gospels, attached themselves with naïve credulity to the *sayings* of Jesus which were related by the same Evangelists and were often inextricably associated with miraculous events. They naturally preferred those

sayings which have come down to us in a detached form and can therefore be interpreted without considering the relation to Jesus' person and work and mission which they certainly had when they were spoken. These sayings then were impudently played off against the miraculous and dogmatic picture of Jesus which was presented by these same Gospels.

It is now notorious that miracles of healing do occur. Hardly any that are ascribed to Jesus are without parallel in our day. That fact removes all the chief objections that once were made against the credibility of our Synoptic Gospels. But we do not gain that advantage without belittling miracles, without rendering them obviously inept to serve the orthodox as proof that Jesus was the Christ. With that we are reduced to the same position as the original disciples. For who ever expected the Messiah to perform miracles? That was naturally expected of Elijah when he should return to earth, and the effect of Jesus' miracles was to convince people that he was Elijah, the Coming One (Mt 11[3], Mk 6[14–16]), while Herod, more superstitious than the Jews, feared he was John the Baptist raised from the dead. Outside the Fourth Gospel there is no hint that the miracles suggested even to the intimate disciples that Jesus was the Christ, or that Jesus himself expected them to have this effect. He regarded them as signals which ought to arouse men's attention to the fact that the Kingdom of God was drawing nigh and the powers of the world to come were already operative. Looking back, we are now able to appreciate how inept was the proof by miracles as it was used by the orthodox of a generation ago. Miracles such as were performed by Elijah of old, by the disciples of Jesus even before his death, and by magicians like Simon cannot without great absurdity be used as proof that Jesus was the Christ—let alone that he was God. So we are none the poorer for having lost this proof, and our enhanced appreciation of the historicity of our Gospels is pure gain. It is pure gain also that (however we may regard miracles) we are able again to think of Jesus as a wonder-worker; for without that trait he is not to be understood at all.

The generation that is passing away put the question of miracles in so false a form that all contention about it was in vain. Both parties to the dispute made themselves absurd. And it seems to us now absurd that such extreme scepticism should have prevailed with regard to the historical worth of the Gospels. How great a revolution a few years have wrought with respect to such opinions can best be appreciated by a conspicuous example. It was thought that Adolf Harnack had gone a little further than a liberal theologian properly might go in the way of defending the historicity of the Gospels. But now Professor Meyer of the same university, the successor of Mommsen as historian of the Roman Empire, writing about Christianity as one who does not profess it, has safe sport in taunting his colleague about his antiquated incredulities.

Our reluctance to admit the existence of a devil, let alone the possibility of demoniacal possession, is evidently not unconnected with the greatest of all the Victorian shams —the pretence that man is good. Not very good, not uniformly good—not saintly, of course, for that is an ideal which makes a narrow appeal—but *fundamentally* good, in spite of all the appearances to the contrary. It would not be possible to maintain this smug optimism when we read the daily papers, were we not prepared to defend our prejudice by the fiction of a criminal class—although in fact every class and every category makes its contribution to the criminal and near-criminal news of every day. Vulgar *means* common, and baseness *is* common—nobody denies that. And yet the dreary fiction of our day which revels in describing mean people leads us to no apprehension of the reality of *our* condition, because the author plainly claims for himself an *alibi* and therefore writes without compassion, so that the reader is encouraged to think that he also is exempt from the touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. I confess that I cannot read *Babbitt* without tears, for I recognize it as symbolical and therefore see myself in it *essentially*, and in despite of the fact that my acquaintances, knowing me superficially, may think me different.

The importance for our generation of Dostoyewski's

work lies in the fact that he compels us to regard his characters as symbolical. He analyses *man*—more acutely than any psychologist, more ruthlessly often, but seldom without compassion. Like one who sees a tiger in the cage and comes home with a deeper comprehension of the family cat, we are the wiser for gazing at Dostoyewski's menagerie. Every animal must be studied in the feral state. Man is no exception. *We* are half-tamed beasts, but the more or less of accidental refinement does not determine the character of the genus. And there is more than that discovered by Dostoyewski's analysis. He uncovers not only the all-too-human (Main Street !), not only the bestial, but also the devilish. ' Earthly, sensual, devilish,' expresses the full gamut of sin (Jas. $3^{15}$). For man is a beast with a difference. And the essential difference is the *spirit* which cuts athwart the soulish life. The most grim and terrible trait in man is not derived from the soul and its various lusts—not *eros*, not even *libido*—but it is the spirit of rebellion against God. A rebellious spirit ! What else is a devil ? Adler goes deeper than Freud when he discovers ' god-almightiness ' (god-almightiness even in the infant !) as the secret explanation of man's conduct. To either of these psychologists the following limerick applies with equal aptness :

> There lives a wise man in Vienna
> Who shows we're all fit for Gehenna.
> So the Law is proved true,
> And the Gospel is too,
> By this terrible Jew of Vienna.

It is paradoxical that people can ' believe in ' analytical psychology and yet not believe in original sin. For the picture of man which this science draws professes to be symbolical—a universal portrait. No man can imagine that he is an exception and that his self-complacency will survive this searching analysis. But Dostoyewski goes deeper than any of the Freudians when he apprehends the *daemonia* in the human tragedy. His grimmest utterance he puts into the mouth of the demon who ' controls ' one of the Karamazov brothers : *Satanas sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto*—Satan am I, and nothing human is foreign to me. That spoils for ever the favourite text of Humanism.

A great deal has occurred of late to upset our complacency. I have mentioned only a few examples. Before long the effect must be visible. And that will mean a substantial change in theology. For Dr. Holmes' witty description of Unitarians, as persons who 'think they are too good to be damned,' is the clue to all 'modern theology.' Our anthropology (in the deep sense of the Delphic injunction, 'Know thyself') determines the character of our theology. Even Spiritualism in its optimistic form may perfectly well be atheistic, but it seems hardly possible to believe in devils or in demoniacal men without being receptive of the idea of God—if for no other reason, because it presents to the religious faculty a *mysterium tremendum*. But, alas! the religious faculty is only too prone to content itself with devils. There is doubtless justification for the boast of the missionary that he goes to pagan lands to teach men not to be afraid in the dark; but it is ominous to reflect how generally we have learned at home not to be afraid even of God.

With this introduction we may perhaps approach with less prejudice the 'unclean spirit.' Perhaps we had better say, *unholy* spirit. For the uncleanness here meant is not filth, but everything that is contrary to the divine will and hateful to God. It is a cheerful thought that no one need be afraid of falling under the control of an unholy spirit, if he practises even an elementary hygiene of the soul. And inasmuch as instances of demoniacal possession are far more common in pagan lands than in Christendom, it would seem as if even our so nominal Christianity were a protection—even to such as have never 'tried' it—as if some virtue went out from Jesus to those who only touch the hem of his garment.

'Silence!' This command because the 'spirit' threatened to betray Jesus' secret: 'We [plural] know who you are. You are God's Holy One.' But with that the articulate voice was silenced, and it proved that no one had paid any serious heed to the cry of a crazy man. The same thing occurred again more than once, and no one heeded it. So remote it was from anybody's thought that this Jesus might be the Christ.

'Come out.' No magic formula of exorcism, no sign of the cross, no prayer, just the sheer command—and it was uttered with full confidence that it must be obeyed. This throws no little light on what is called the 'self-consciousness of Jesus.' An amazing man! who had no doubt that he could control a world of demons! This, according to St. Mark, was the first miracle that Jesus performed, and he acted instantly, with absolute assurance. And his confidence was justified. Out came the spirit, uttering its last cry through that mouth, and leaving the body convulsed until its proper soul could regain control.

This casting out of the unholy spirit was taken as a signal for the adjournment of the religious meeting, and the people went away commenting in awesome whispers upon the uncanny experience. If religion were not just simply religion, this sort of thing might be more common in religious meetings.

'*At once* his fame spread in all directions through the whole neighbourhood of Galilee.' I have remarked already that 'at once' is here a sign of St. Mark's haste to get on with the story. He anticipates the situation which was first brought about by the mission of the Twelve, and which put an end to Jesus' stay in Galilee. When his popularity had become so great there was nothing to do but to leave.

### ¶ 8. Simon's Mother-in-Law.

Mk $1^{29-31}$. **And on leaving the synagogue they went at once along with James and John to the house of Simon and Andrew.** [30] **There Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, and they told him at once about her,** [31] **and he went up to her and grasping her hand made her rise, and the fever left her at once and she waited on them.**

'At once' occurs three times in this short paragraph. We have learned not to attach too much importance to it; but here the Evangelist means us to understand that all this happened in a brief space of time on the first Sabbath day in Capernaum. On leaving the synagogue Jesus with his four disciples went straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. This is the house that was to be his home—the

only home he was to know from that time on. In seven other instances, exclusive of parallels, it is mentioned familiarly as 'the house,' which means the same as if we were to say 'home' or 'at home' (Mk $2^{1}$, $7^{17}$, $9^{33}$; Mt $9^{28}$, $13^{1,36}$, $17^{25}$). This expression would come natural to Peter, the owner of the house, who could not forget that he had provided Jesus with a home. St. Luke evidently did not notice the significant implication of this word, for he has omitted it in every one of his parallel passages. But the fact that St. Matthew uses it nearly as often as St. Mark suggests that 'Q' also was a Petrine source. We are left to wonder where Jesus spent the first night after the calling of the Four, for it would seem that he had not entered this house before and therefore knew nothing of the sickness of Simon's mother-in-law. About that they hastened to tell him (Mark might well have used another 'at once'), evidently because they argued that one who could drive out an evil spirit would find no difficulty in curing a fever. Nor did Jesus himself have any doubt about that, though we are given to understand that this was his first cure of a sick person. 'At once'—that is, without a moment's hesitation —he went up to her, and grasping her hand made her rise. In this first instance of a cure we note a trait which was characteristic of Jesus. Physical contact of one sort or another was a means he commonly employed to effect his cures. 'Grasping her hand' was not simply a means of lifting her up, it was a means of curing her. The cure was 'at once' so complete that she was able to wait on them— though, in fact, no laborious work might be done on the Sabbath, and, besides, the wife must have been at hand to do the part of a hostess. We are not told how it happened that a mother-in-law was living in the house shared by the two brothers. The house and the wife were among the things Peter renounced when he 'left all' and followed Jesus to Jerusalem (Mk $10^{28}$). But it proved that in the end he was not required to adhere to this renunciation; for it appears from 1 Cor. $9^{5}$ that, in spite of the difficulties of a missionary life, Cephas and the brethren of the Lord and all the apostles, except St. Paul and Barnabas, were accustomed to 'lead about' their wives on their journeys.

¶ 9. When Evening Came.

Mk $1^{32-34}$. **And when evening came and the sun was set they brought to him all that were sick or possessed by demons. [33] And the whole town was gathered at the door. And he cured many who were ill with various diseases [34] and cast out many demons, and because they knew him he did not allow the demons to speak.**

That 'the sun was set' is important, for that marked the end of the Sabbath. The Jewish day begins with the sunset and ends with it. Not till that moment therefore were people free to bring their sick to Jesus. The first two miracles of healing wrought on the Sabbath had taken all so much by surprise that no one had yet thought of blaming Jesus for a breach of the law. Besides, no obvious 'labour' was performed in uttering a mere word of command or in taking a person by the hand. But 'bringing' the sick to the door of Jesus' home was a different matter: to carry a burden was expressly forbidden by the Law. Therefore, though full of the liveliest expectation, the people waited till the sun had set. Then they hurried to him with 'all' their sick. Knowing how prone are sick folks to grasp at any hope of healing, we have no reason to suppose that the Evangelist exaggerates. Luke reports that he healed 'them'; Matthew, that he healed 'all'—they both mean the same thing; but Mark does not exaggerate, he claims merely that Jesus healed 'many' and cast out 'many' demons. Elsewhere too he has no scruple about admitting that at Nazareth 'he *could not* do any miracle, besides laying his hands on a few sick persons and curing them' (Mk $6^{5}$), whereas Matthew ($13^{58}$) says that 'he *did not* do many miracles because of their unbelief.' Luke ($4^{23-28}$), while he implies that Jesus did no such works in his own country as he did in Capernaum, ascribes this to a divine dispensation, not by any means to a limitation of the Lord's power due to unbelief. Many such indications as these (and one of them would be enough for the purpose) demonstrate the priority of St. Mark's Gospel.

So far is Jesus from regarding his miracles as a proof of his Messiahship that he does not allow the demons to speak lest they might betray his secret.

¶ 10. Prayer and Preaching.

Mk 1[35–39]. **And early in the morning, a long while before daylight, he got up and went away to a lonely spot, and there he prayed.** [36] **And Simon and his companions hunted for him,** [37] **and when they found him they told him, 'Everybody is looking for you.'** [38] **But he said to them, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the adjoining country towns, so that I may proclaim the Gospel there too, for that is why I came out.'** [39] **And he went and proclaimed the Gospel in their synagogues throughout the whole of Galilee, casting out demons too.**

'There he prayed.' There can be no doubt that Jesus was a religious man. That was a part of his humiliation, a trait of his humanity. So thought the author of the Fourth Gospel, who prefers to represent that Jesus never prayed. For what he substitutes (in chapter 17) for the human prayer in Gethsemane is a prayer only in name, without numinous awe, without a trace of religious reverence. No wonder that this Evangelist suppresses the prayer from the Cross. The Johannine Jesus is without religion, but 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' is a profoundly religious cry. And Jesus was indeed a religious man. He often felt a compelling desire to pray, and he could satisfy it only by being *alone* with God (Lk 5[16]; Mk 6[46], 14[35]). No word of his is recorded about the practice of common prayer or the ritual of the Temple and synagogue, except that he applies to the Temple the words of Isaiah, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.' But for the Temple as it was, with its traffic in animal sacrifices, its money-changers, and its treasury, he had only words and gestures of scorn. He did not pray there: he disputed, 'syllogizing invidious verities.' He had bitter things to say also about the worship he beheld in the synagogues (Mk 12[39], Mt 6[2, 5]). Religious man as he was, and by no means a separatist or dissenter, he scourged the religion of his people with his whip of cords—that is to say, he scourges *religion*, he is as terrible a critic of Christianity as is Kierkegaard. It is significant that he does not impose prayer upon his disciples as a religious *duty*, as a pious practice. He assumed, that being men (religious animals), they would feel an inward compulsion to prayer; so he says, 'when you

pray,' and he counsels us (*when* that human need is felt) to seek out a place where we can be alone with God (Mt $6^{6}$). In the fisherman's cottage which had become his home there was no ' closet ' where he could withdraw, so before it was dawn he went out and sought a lonely spot where he could pray. He felt this imperative necessity to pray, although it was a weekday (a ' blue Monday ') following immediately upon the Sabbath where he had both prayed and preached in the synagogue.

He must have gone far, for though all were looking for him, none but the anxious disciples found him. Peter at their head—perhaps because it was he who told the story (' I and my companions '). They wondered that Jesus was not disposed to enjoy his popularity at Capernaum. In fact, he was not indifferent to his popularity, for there does seem to be a note of exultation in his reply : ' Let us go elsewhere, to the adjoining country towns, so that I may proclaim the Gospel there too.' ' Proclaim ' is the word used—but that meant proclaiming the Gospel, as Matthew and Luke in their different ways rightly interpret it. It was the brief ' Gospel of God ' which was summarized in verse 15. It was not *preaching*, in our sense—by no means so religious as our preaching. Therefore he did not win the really religious people, the Pharisees, but was accounted by them a ' sinner,' *i.e.* an irreligious man. If he had been willing to pronounce with unction ' the blessed word Mesopotamia,' he might have converted as many religious people as a modern evangelist. Yet for this mere heralding of God's Gospel (which is so much less ambitious than what we preachers essay to do) Jesus felt the need of preparing himself by solitary prayer.

' That is why I came out.' Not ' out from God,' in the manner of the Fourth Gospel (Jn $16^{27-29}$), for that is not in St. Mark's manner, and it would be a shocking solecism at the beginning of a Gospel which preserves the historical perspective and discloses Jesus' secret only at the end. Jesus hushed the demons in vain, if he himself told ' who he is,' speaking so ' plainly and without parables.' The phrase might mean, ' I came out from Nazareth ' ; but more probably he would say that he left Capernaum before it

was light, intending to fortify himself with prayer and then start on his tour without his disciples. Now he invites them—' Let us go.' Only one incident of this tour is commemorated (1[40–45]), and it likely did not take long to visit the ' adjoining country towns '—though the Evangelist in his summary account of the tour amplifies its scope to ' the whole of Galilee.' When later he sent out the Twelve the account suggests a hasty mission (Mk 6[7–13]), which is borne out by Luke's phrase in another connection (Lk 10[4]), ' Salute no man by the way.' Jesus continued to use the synagogues, as he had begun to do in Capernaum. They were open to him not only on the Sabbath day, for there were assemblies on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and besides the synagogue was a school and therefore always open.

' Casting out demons too.' This was incidental. Jesus' business was to proclaim the Gospel.

If I have been tedious in commenting too long upon the first verses of this chapter, I make amends by brevity when once the great prejudices have been disposed of and when the text is so clear that it does not stand in need of much interpretation.

Here is a place where there is little for the interpreter to do, and it is therefore a good place to interject a word-picture of the Holy Land, such as all the ' Lives ' of Jesus are adorned with, even if they lack proper illustrations in line or colour.

Some notions of geography and history might be in place—just enough to let Sunday-school scholars know how deep is the Red Sea, how small is the Sea of Tiberias, how remote in space and time (above all, how remote from our sympathy) is the Galilee of our Lord's day, what a wretched hole was the poor village of Capernaum, and how insignificant a figure in history was Jesus of Nazareth. But it is more interesting to follow Jesus and his companions on their tour. Instructed as we all now are in archaeology, we can behold them with our mind's eye as they journey, clad in the dress of the Bedouin, among crowds who were all dressed in the same fashion (if the artist has not been so inept as to dress them in sheets) ; we can see them passing through the

Norman gate of a city, halting before the Saracenic door of a synagogue, which is surrounded by picturesque dwellings all crowned by Byzantine domes.

Years ago when I was an archaeologist this sham archaeology vexed me sore, and I am still raw to the touch of it. 'The unchanging Orient' is the catch-word which is thought to justify the artist in painting the Palestine of to-day and putting Jesus and his disciples into the picture. It is a grievous thing that almost all are duped by it. And missionaries have carried this sort of thing into China and Japan, making our religion seem doubly strange and unreal. How can such a Jesus as we now depict stand comparison with the traditional figure of the Buddha? And this is a hoax which can be easily exposed. A long while ago I relished the shrewd remark which Bishop Gore made on returning from a visit to Palestine. He said in effect that to understand what Palestine was like in the time of our Lord one must begin by eliminating the Arab, then obliterate in turn all traces of the Saracen, of the Norman crusaders, and of the Byzantine Empire. I am willing to grant that the unchanging Arab has worn the same dress for ten million years—but in Jesus' day there were no Arabs in Galilee. And with that dress goes the Saracen arch, of course the Norman pointed arch, and probably even the round arch, except where Romans were the builders. The architecture, as remains in northern Syria show, was essentially Greek, with marked Syrian characteristics. And as for the dress—I had rather follow the tradition of the earliest Christian art, which depicted Christ and his Apostles in the dress which was commonly worn wherever Alexander had carried Greek rule and spread Greek culture. The tunic and pallium was also the standard dress of the Roman Empire outside of Rome. The chasuble which St. Paul left at Troas was a rain cloak, suitable to such a traveller.

But enough of that. The tragic thing is that even the most accurate and erudite archaeology, instead of bringing Jesus near to us, as its intention is, pushes him further and hopelessly far away. That, as Schweitzer observes, was the bitter delusion of our generation. All the 'Lives' of Jesus sought to make the historical Jesus vividly real and present

to the imagination by enlivening the picture with the aid of all the details of ancient life and dress and manners which archaeology has placed at our disposal. But to our astonishment and dismay, the more we laboured to bring him near, the more inexorably he receded into the past. It is only when we ignore the picturesque but trivial differences of national custom, the unessential distinctions between modern and antique, that Jesus can draw near to us and be contemporary. And it is only as our contemporary that Jesus can call us. No man will leave all to follow him who does not hear his voice, speaking not in the unintelligible dialect of Palestine, but in the tongue to which we were born.

So I will say no more about the history and geography of Palestine.

¶ II. A Leper Healed.

Mk 1[40–45]. **And there came to him a leper who besought him and fell on his knees before him. 'If you wish to,' he said, 'you can make me clean.' [41] And Jesus felt compassion for him and stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I do wish it. Be made clean.' [42] And at once as Jesus spoke the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. [43] And Jesus snorting at him at once drove him away, [44] saying to him, 'See that you say nothing about this to anybody. But begone! Show yourself to the priest and for your ritual cleansing offer the sacrifices which Moses prescribed as a public attestation of a cure. [45] But he went off and began to proclaim and spread the news to such an extent that Jesus could no longer enter openly into any town but stayed outside in lonely places, and people came to him from all directions.**

The only valid objection to miracles is that they do not occur. Lepers are not cured. Quite so. That is what Jesus' fellow-countrymen believed. That therefore is the reason why this miracle alone is recounted of all that Jesus performed on his tour. It is the most stupendous work of healing that St. Mark reports in his Gospel, and that is the reason why it had consequences so embarrassing to

Jesus. Luke tells of the healing of ten lepers (17[12]), and Matthew implies that such cures were not infrequent—that 'lepers are cleansed' was one of the signs the Baptist was asked to ponder (11[5]), and even the disciples were expected to cure lepers (10[8]). And though St. Mark tells only this one story, he makes reference to 'the house of Simon the leper' (14[3]) where Jesus took his last supper but one; and as Simon (*cp.* Lk 7[40]) was evidently a cured leper, we must assume that he was cured by Jesus.

That leprosy is curable is the assumption of the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the book of Leviticus, which give elaborate directions for ascertaining and attesting a cure. That belief may have been due to defective diagnosis. But leprosy is *now* curable by medical treatment. There remains the doubt whether it can be cured without medicine. Mr. Hickson assures me that he cured several lepers in China, and he relates interesting details about the rapidity of the cures. It is very wise of modern miracle-workers to be cautious and to devote themselves especially to the cure of functional nervous disorders; but the line is drawn there only for the sake of the weak brethren: there is really no place where fact and theory compel us to draw it.

This leper was encountered while Jesus was travelling from one town to another; for the Law required lepers to 'dwell alone without the camp.' 'Camp' is a fiction; it means an inhabited place. His garments must be rent, his hair loose, his upper lip covered, as a visible sign of his contagious disease, while as an audible warning he must cry, 'Unclean! unclean!' (Lev. 13[45, 46]). This leper was offensively importunate. Not content with beseeching Jesus from afar, he came so near to him that where he knelt he was within touching distance.

'If you *will*, you *can*.' That expresses the sort of faith Jesus was disposed to reward (Mt 8[8–10]). 'If thou canst' was not a form of address that pleased him (Mk 9[22, 23]). It seems as if he preferred to have his goodwill called in question rather than his power—perhaps because he felt that it was God's power men doubted. But here the reason for Jesus' favourable response is said to be that he

'felt compassion.' And what more compassionable object than a leper? It is plain enough from the Synoptic Gospels that compassion was the motive of all of Jesus' miracles. Yet, in spite of his compassion, it is sometimes evident that he performed them with reluctance (Mk $7^{25-30}$, $9^{27-30}$). Once they were done, and the fame of them, in spite of every precaution, was noised abroad, Jesus conceived that men ought to see in them a warning (Mt $11^{20, 21}$) and a promise (Mt $11^{4, 5}$) of the coming Day of the Lord. If we follow the Fourth Gospel in regarding them as 'signs' coldly calculated to manifest forth his glory and compel people to believe in him as the Christ, we sacrifice his compassion, and we are left without any clue to explain why he so urgently required that his miracles should be kept quiet. Here is a place where harmonizing is out of the question: you have to make a choice between the Fourth Gospel and the earlier tradition.

Something needs to be said about the word 'compassion' and the verb to compassionate, to feel compassion. *Bowels* is the word for compassion in Hebrew, and our familiar version sometimes translates it literally—much to the discomfiture of finely fibred souls. It is a violent anthropomorphism of Isaiah's ($63^{15}$) when he speaks of 'the sounding of God's bowels,' and we cannot easily forgive St. Paul (Phil. $1^{8}$) for speaking of 'the bowels of Jesus Christ.' But St. Paul can be justified: Jesus *was* a man, and he has not discarded the essential traits of his humanity. Just for this reason he *is* a compassionate Saviour (Heb. $2^{17}$, $4^{15}$, $5^{2}$). The Greeks too regarded the bowels (not the heart) as the seat of the affections—and they have been justified by physiological psychology. One who feels his compassion or affection *there* need not fear St. John's bitter condemnation of those who love only 'with the tongue.' The Greeks had no verb (*splagchnizomai*) to correspond with this noun: that seems to have been coined by the Jewish Dispersion, following their own idiom, and in the New Testament it is used only in the Gospels and only with reference to Jesus.

Moved by compassion, Jesus 'stretched out his hand and *touched* the leper, saying, 'I do wish it. Be made

clean!' The command, one might think, would have sufficed, without touching the loathsome and contagious body. Jesus did not touch the demoniacs. But for himself he did not fear contagion, and contact of one sort or another was a method he regularly employed for physical cures. Only in this instance he did not 'Lay his hand' upon the leprous person, but merely touched him.

'At once.' Again we may discount this word. The man may at once have been certain of his cure, but hardly before some hours had passed could he have visible proof that wholesome flesh was beginning to cover his sores.

But 'at once' applies perfectly to Jesus' sudden change of mood. 'And Jesus snorting at him at once drove him away, saying to him, "See that you say nothing about this to anybody. But begone! Show yourself to the priest." The sacrifice you perform in the Temple is the proper way of witnessing to your cure.'

We cannot properly think of Jesus without the capacity for wrath (Mk 3[5]); but on this occasion there seems to be nothing, and there was certainly nobody, to arouse it. If he had been angry with the man for saying, 'If you will,' he would have shown his temper before; and there is no hint that he anticipated the leper's disobedience. 'Snorting' is a hard word, which Matthew and Luke deal with adroitly by dropping it out, as they both do also the phrase, 'he drove him away,' while Luke carries consistency further by softening 'Begone!' into 'when you have gone away.' This calls our attention to the fact that there are actually *three* hard words—all of them perfectly consistent with one another, but all of them violently inconsistent with the word compassion. Apparently to bring consistency out of this inconsistency a 'Western' reading has it that at the beginning Jesus 'was angry' instead of 'compassionate.' But that makes it incomprehensible that he performed the cure. Ingenuity worse than wasted! For Jesus *was* just what St. Mark's text gives us to understand—an incomprehensible, a paradoxical man, a man at all events of strong and sudden passions. And what do our versions make of all this? The Revised Version has: 'He strictly charged him' (that as an equivalent for 'snorting'!),

'and straightway sent him out,' and 'go thy way.' Not much stronger are the moderns: 'He sent him with the stern charge . . . away and show yourself to the priest' (Moffatt). Snorting (like a horse) is the proper meaning of the word; but perhaps I might not have been bold enough to use it here, were it not for an experience I had when I was co-operating with Mr. Hickson. I noticed that in dealing with one of his patients he panted and snorted violently; and later he explained to me that he felt then that he was dealing with evil spirits. I repeat that explanation for what it may be worth. It has value if it merely serves to suggest that a healer may snort at his patient without feeling any anger, or at least without feeling anger at *him*. It suggests to me also the reflection that commiseration, if it is real, if it is felt in the bowels, may swiftly give place to violent signs of indignation, to a heaving of the diaphragm productive of a snort. Indignation at what? Why, of course, at the monstrous tragedy of human life, at the hideous evil that can reduce a man to such a plight. Who would be more apt to feel this than he who came to be the Saviour of men? A young prince who hitherto had been sheltered from the ugly sights of life saw in one day a decrepit old man, a dead body, and a putrefying corpse. That was enough to effect the 'conversion' of Gautama Buddha. Are we to suppose that Jesus was a less sensitive young man? The difference between Gautama and Jesus lay not in the intensity of the horror with which they beheld the evil aspects of human life, but in the source to which they traced these evils. The Buddha exposed with rare psychologic clarity the dreary wheel of life: Jesus piercingly beheld all evil as a consequence of sin. He would not admit that signal misfortunes proved the greater sin of the immediate sufferers; but in rejecting this popular interpretation in the case of the Galileans whom Herod had killed, or of the eighteen men on whom the tower in Siloam fell, his conclusion is widely devastating: 'Except you repent you will *all* likewise perish' (Lk $13^{1-5}$). He would half approve the dogma of Christian Science that disease is an 'error of mortal mind'—only he would have said *sin* of mortal mind, and

he would have denied, as we have seen above, all equivalence between personal guilt and personal misfortune. 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But Jesus would be the last to deny that sin is the source of disease and death, or that a man is himself in a measure responsible for his health. We ourselves cannot help thinking so, even when we would not. We would form a different opinion of Jesus and hardly venture to pronounce him a sinless man, if he had died by what we call a 'natural death,' that is, of disease. One cannot but count it a blot upon the character of Buddha that he died of a surfeit of pork.

We discover a special pathos in Jesus' miracles of healing when we realize that in performing them he felt that he was engaged in his proper conflict with sin. In his story of the raising of Lazarus, St. John represents Jesus as 'panting' or 'snorting' in his conflict with the last enemy Death (Jn $13^{33, 38}$). It is not so clear why this word is used in Matthew's account ($9^{30}$) of the healing of two blind men. But that sickness had to do with sin and healing with its forgiveness is made clear by the next instance we are about to study (Mk $2^{1-12}$). And that Jesus regarded the leper as a sinner becomes evident when we translate with their full force the words which describe his reaction, when we see how swiftly compassion turned to disgust. To him he did not say, 'My son, your sins are forgiven,' but for his forgiveness as well as for his ritual 'cleansing' he sent him to the priest. Leviticus associates leprosy with sin and for that reason provides a 'guilt offering.' The 'cleansing' of leprosy denotes properly the ritual atonement, which was also a public attestation that a man was healed and need not any longer shun the company of his fellow-men. Only in the Gospels is the word 'cleanse' used for an effective cure.

'See that you say nothing about this to anybody.' That was Jesus' usual precaution—usually in vain. Only in the case of a leper was it reasonable to add: Begone! You were impudent to come so near. The priest must inspect you before you can be treated as a clean man, and the sacrifices must be offered for your sins. Verily Jesus

was not a Dissenter! and how far he was from being a Liberal! The prophet sends him to the priest! And what a priest! the medicine-man of the tribes of Israel! Read the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus! And what sacrifices! what a ritual! Read the fourteenth chapter! 'Two living clean birds and cedar wood and scarlet and hyssop . . . one bird to be killed in an earthen vessel over running water . . . the living bird dipped in its blood and let loose —then eight days later, two he-lambs and one ewe-lamb . . . a wave offering and a guilt offering . . . the priest putting the blood of the guilt offering upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot' . . . and the same thing later with the oil, *etc. etc.* Not one jot or tittle of the Law would Jesus have omitted. No ritual of Egypt or Babylonia or Rome was ever more meticulous and irrational. It is an offence to Evangelical Christianity that he should give such a command to the leper.

However, the leper did not obey. Quite reasonably, *we* would say. For Jerusalem was a long way off, and what was done there could have little or no effect upon his social position in Galilee. Moreover this law was antiquated before it was written, and who knows if any priest had ever performed the ritual it prescribed? Certainly no living priest, for who had ever heard of a leper being cleansed since the days of Elisha? Instead, the man proclaimed aloud that he was healed, causing such an excitement that the position of the healer and the healed was completely reversed: the leper was welcomed in the towns, while Jesus, if he would avoid the curiosity of the crowds, was obliged to stay outside. The days of his preaching in the synagogues were over. He and his disciples then formed the habit of sleeping in the open (Mt $8^{20}$) —a habit they pretty regularly maintained (except when they had the refuge of Peter's house at Capernaum) up to the last days in Jerusalem (Mk $11^{19}$). Towns and synagogues, however, were no longer necessary to him, for in the lonely places where he took refuge 'people came to him from all directions.'

I reluctantly write so many pages about a paragraph of six short verses. But I have said no more than seemed compellingly necessary to say. And if anything emerges from this discussion which is both true and new, it is in place to reflect that this gain is due to a faithful adherence to the text and a close examination of it which in any 'Life' of Jesus would seem pedantical. It would be like climbing a mountain path after a fantastical flight in the air.

## Section 3. ¶¶ 12–21

## MEETING OPPOSITION

### Mk $2^{1}$—$3^{35}$

### ¶ 12. The Paralytic.

Mk $2^{1-12}$. **When he entered Capernaum again after some days it was reported that he was at home, [2] and a large number at once gathered till there was no room for them even about the door, and he was telling them his message. [3] And a company came to him bringing a paralytic carried by four men. [4] And not being able to get near him on account of the crowd, they opened up the roof under which he was, and digging it up, lowered the mattress on which the paralytic lay. [5] And when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' [6] Now there were some scribes sitting there who were arguing in their hearts, [7] 'Why does this man talk like this? This is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' [8] And at once conscious in his spirit that they were arguing in this way Jesus said to them, 'Why do you argue thus in your hearts? [9] Which is the easier thing? to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven"? or to say, "Rise, lift up your mattress and go"? [10] But to let you know that man has power to forgive sins on earth,'—turning to the paralytic he said, [11] 'I tell you, Rise! lift up your mattress and go home.' [12] And he rose, lifted up his mattress at once, and went out before them all, so that all were astonished and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this before.'**

'After some days' would seem to indicate for the tour of Galilee a very short duration. If so much could be done

in ' some days,' how long must have been Jesus' whole stay in Galilee, from the day when he stood forth to proclaim the Gospel until his retreat into pagan territory ? how long did that retreat last ? and how many were the last days in Jerusalem ? It was very far from St. Mark's intention to answer such questions. His readers probably knew how short was Jesus' ' public ministry.' It is certain that if we had only the first three Gospels, it would never have entered any one's head to suppose that our Lord's public activity lasted more than a year or included more than one Passover. But St. Mark gives no definite indications of time till he reaches the account of the last days in Jerusalem, and then he counted by days. Ten days is a liberal estimate for this last part of the story, from the secret march through Galilee and the journey with the pilgrims to Jerusalem, to the disputes in the Temple, the supper at Bethany, the last supper, the trial, the crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection. Yet two-fifths of St. Mark's Gospel is occupied with these few days. We must not hastily jump at the conclusion that all the rest of the story might have covered only fifteen days. There are too many Sabbaths in the story to admit of so brief a reckoning. Then, of course, psychological considerations require a certain lapse of time for the growth of Jesus' popularity and for the development of opposition—*not*, however, as the modern biographers would have us believe, for the psychological development of Jesus. But for this, the space of one year is sufficient, and that is the Synoptical tradition. In the early spring Jesus was baptized ; in his early teaching he could point to the flowers of the field—the golden broom, I suppose, which would be turned into charcoal for the baker's oven ; he could point later to the ripening grain ; and when opposition was already grown strong his disciples plucked the ripe ears. We may suppose that he spent the winter in pagan parts. The following spring he went up to the Passover and was put to death.

' At home '—literally, ' in the house ' ; but the Greek language has no other way of saying, ' at home,' and this house of Peter and Andrew was in fact the only home Jesus had after he left Nazareth. What sort of a home a

fisherman might have in Capernaum we can imagine. No wonder there was not enough room there for the crowd, and that while he stayed in Capernaum Jesus planned to meet the people in the synagogue, or by the seashore, or on a near-by mountain. Capernaum had become his home town. Only Chorazin and Bethsaida are mentioned along with it as cities which had the high privilege of witnessing many of his miracles (Mt $11^{20-23}$). Almost all that is related in the first four chapters occurred in or near Capernaum. Capernaum was supremely favoured: 'And thou, Capernaum! *Exalted to heaven? No, you will sink to hades!*' Why this upbraiding of the favoured cities? Because they did not believe? No, they believed the Gospel and crowded to hear its preacher, but—'they would not repent.' His popularity was for this reason bitter to Jesus. We do not commonly reflect that in his proclamation he required (and requires now of us) *two* things: not only faith, but also repentance (Mk $1^{15}$).

'He was telling them his message.' That, of course, was the Gospel. Jesus had only one message: that God's Kingdom was coming and men must prepare to meet that day. Jesus did not deal with so many themes as the modern preacher essays to compass. Perhaps he was not so intellectual as some of them. I am not abashed at conceding this, for to believe that he was an intellectual giant seems to me no more necessary than to believe that he was a physical giant. Both together would not weigh one ounce as proof that he was God. One message—but how many different ways he had of telling it! Mark does not show that so clearly as do Matthew and Luke—or rather their common source 'Q.' Here Mark tantalizes us. We wish he had let us know how Jesus told his message on this occasion to crowds so eager to hear. Perhaps Mark was more interested in action than in teaching. Or perhaps we have Peter to blame (or to praise) for this characteristic of the Gospel according to St. Mark—for Peter was certainly not an intellectual man. In this case we may praise Peter, for it is not likely that on this occasion the 'sermon' was so edifying as the extraordinary interruption which broke up the meeting. The scribes were listening without

protest—which goes to prove that the ' message ' had not got beneath their skin. Jesus may have been telling them, without provoking dissent, that men must be perfect like their Father in heaven ; but when he rose up and did what the perfect man must do—when he forgave sins, showing himself kind to the unthankful and the evil—then his message was understood and . . . execrated.

The picturesque detail of this narrative is characteristic of St. Mark and suggests an eye-witness (Peter). Matthew leaves all this out, and Luke abbreviates—it was of no importance to him that this happened in the home of Peter.

As soon as it was learned that Jesus had returned to Capernaum a crowd filled the small house of the fishermen and even the street in front of the door. And while he was ' telling his message ' to the standing crowd (Jesus and the scribes alone being seated as teachers should be) there came a company of people bringing a sick man to be healed. Being paralysed, he had to be carried on a mattress of sorts, which was supported by four men, each one holding a corner. Not being able to press through the door, they had the resolution to carry their burden up the outside stairway to the flat roof of the house. So far Biblical archaeology is able to illuminate the situation. But why besides opening the roof they also had to *dig it up*—what precisely that meant, and how it could be accomplished without danger to Jesus and the crowd, our archaeology is impotent to explain. Luke did not understand it, and so he suppressed it. Perhaps I am the only archaeologist that understands what is meant—and I will not tell, because such things seem too trivial to dwell upon in an interpretation of the Gospel. I remark only that because this detail is not understandable it is the more evidently authentic. The hole being made, we can imagine without much archaeology how the mattress was lowered by four ropes till the sick man lay at the feet of Jesus.

All of this is omitted by St. Matthew. Yet it is not unimportant, for it was precisely in this bold and ingenious persistency that Jesus ' *saw their faith.*' Faith is a thing that can be seen ! Assuredly. You can see it in a man's

face, you can see it in his actions. These friends of the sick man evidently had *faith* of a sort, and a great deal of it; but it was little more than *fides qua creditur*—a blind trust in Jesus as a healer, without knowing who or what he was besides that. It was not faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and there is no hint that it was accompanied by that 'faith in the Gospel' which Jesus required. And yet Jesus welcomed it!—as he did every instance of trust in his power to help. 'Help now!' was the acclaim most flattering to the Oriental despot, because it implied a recognition of his power. That is what *hosanna* means. Was Jesus therefore merely flattered by men's faith? Or did he prize it as the victory which overcometh the world? He was in a strange position: men must have faith in him to be saved; and yet he could not require this faith so long as he was unable to make them understand who he was.

To this faith then Jesus responded with his whole heart. But it was for the help of the paralytic, not directly to the advantage of the friends who showed their faith by bringing him. Justly enough, for that is what their faith asked. Yet we have reason to be surprised at this sudden turn: 'saw *their* faith—said to the paralytic . . .' The paralytic, if he had any faith, had not showed it—he was simply carried there as a dead weight. 'Salvation by faith'—here it would seem as if a man might be saved by other people's faith. That does not seem incredible to me, for I have been saved (perhaps) by my mother's faith, and I reflect that few would be saved if vicarious faith were not effectual for salvation. St. Paul contemplated such a case (1 Cor. $7^{14-16}$) when he asserted the dogma that children are sanctified by *one* believing parent and expressed the hope that an unbelieving husband or wife might be sanctified by a believing partner. But—'how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?' It must be recognized that we do not like the idea of vicarious faith or vicarious atonement. Why? Because we prefer to save ourselves.

'Son, your sins are forgiven.'—*There* is the surprise of this story, and the sharp point of it all—if anything can surprise us who are indisposed to admit that there can be

anything surprising in the Gospels, anything incomprehensible or paradoxical. The scribes were properly surprised. These official teachers and guardians of the Jewish religion promptly recognized their enemy, and from that time forward they steadily opposed him, persecuted him, and finally put him to death. Always substantially for the same reason, that he forgave sins, consequently consorted with sinners, proclaiming that God forgives as freely as he did, not on onerous conditions, but merely for the asking —sheer forgiveness, justification by faith, apart from the works of the Law. Such principles, they judged, or at least such practice, was inimical not only to religion but also to morality. The man was a blasphemer and must be put to death. And, in fact, the scribes unerringly placed their finger upon the most outstanding characteristic of Jesus. If the ' essence of Christianity ' is to be discovered in the differentium which distinguishes it from all other religions, *there it is*. We see it as plainly in the character as in the teaching of Jesus, and he impressed it indelibly upon his disciples. The Church has never utterly lost this impress, and even in Islam there remain traces of it.

This was a most flagrant instance. So it must seem even to us. The man had expressed no penitence and had not even asked for the forgiveness of his sins. He was brought there for the healing of a physical infirmity, and Jesus said, ' Your sins are forgiven.' That was not what he asked, perhaps not what he consciously desired. In such a case the man might be indignant at the assumption that he had sins to be forgiven. Jesus' sweeping assumption that all men are sinners, that all must repent, may mitigate the offence he offered in so judging of a particular person ; but to us, bred in the traditions of modern Humanism, it makes *him* ridiculous. Worse still it would be if we must suppose that Jesus was so superstitious as to imagine that disease might be a consequence of sin. Our notion has been that sin was merely a consequence of disease. Materialism had been all intent to prove that thesis.—So we might have argued not a long while ago. But *now* what could be more modern than this perception of Jesus' that many bodily infirmities are due to a trouble of the soul. We are familiar

with such cases. It does not seem at all incredible to us now that this man's paralysis which made him a heavy burden to himself and to his friends was not due to the lesion of a nerve, a traumatism of the cerebral cortex, or to any physical cause whatsoever, but was first of all a paralysis of the will due to some deep chagrin or some profound disgust—in this case, the apprehension that he was a hopeless sinner. But how did Jesus discern this? How was it that he could so promptly and so confidently diagnose the cause of this man's malady? Well, to attribute such rare perspicacity to Jesus is not to attribute to him any supernatural power. Perhaps he was a gifted physiognomist. He seems to have seen that this man was a sinner as plainly as he saw the faith of his friends. Mind reading, second sight, *etc.*, are supernormal but not superhuman endowments. The Evangelists frequently attribute such powers to Jesus. In this same passage it is implied that he read the unspoken thoughts of the scribes. I have known men who had such powers—men whom no one would take to be gods. If we are chary about admitting such powers in Jesus, it may be because we prefer (democratically) to regard him as an average man rather than as an extraordinary man.

Jesus perceiving the root of this man's malady, did not seek to cure him by means of physical contact, but did the one thing which could resolve the paralysing cramp of his soul: he assured him of the forgiveness of his sins. 'Your sins are forgiven' is declarative; it does not expressly assert that Jesus was the agent in forgiving. But the scribes were not at fault in assuming that Jesus spoke with authority, that he personally forgave the sinner. Hence the outspoken protest. Perhaps they murmured it one to another, certainly it could be read on their faces—'Why does this man talk like this? This is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' According to their dogma God himself does not forgive sins in this way, does not exercise sheer forgiveness, does not indeed forgive sinners, but forgives men only when they have ceased to be sinners and have brought forth fruits meet for repentance. The paralytic also must have understood that Jesus

forgave him, for the mere declaration that ' God pardoneth and absolveth *all* those that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel ' (the form of ' absolution ' which the Church of England borrowed from Calvin) will not persuade any man who is really burdened with a sense of his guilt that *his* sins are forgiven. Besides this general declaration of the Gospel there is needed the individual application. That indeed Jesus made: ' Thy sins are forgiven.' But this implies a personal act of forgiveness. One will hardly be persuaded that God forgives him unless some man forgives. How can a man believe in God's forgiveness when his fellow-men, who because of their own frailty have so much reason to be compassionate, are hard and unforgiving ? But if *one* turns to him with the personal word, ' I forgive thee '—not a mere word but an attitude, showing that he counts the sinner's past sin no obstacle to his love and fellowship—then a man may know himself to be forgiven. He can argue *a fortiori* (as Jesus teaches us to argue). If a man forgives, how much more my Father in heaven. But it is not *every* man whose forgiveness counts in this way. The easy-going forgiver of sins is justly regarded by the sinner as *particeps criminis*. But in receiving Jesus' forgiveness no one felt that he was encountering a ' mush of concession.' Rather he was electrified by the paradox that a man so righteous, who also enjoined upon others precepts so lofty and impossible, should so compassionately stoop (without any show of condescension) to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon the most flagrant of sinners. From first to last, this was his great offence in the eyes of the Pharisees—whether he expressed his forgiveness in word or by eating with tax-gatherers and sinners. To us who know him to be the Christ, Jesus' forgiveness is not less paradoxical, for we know him as ' Jesus Christ the righteous.' The assurance that he is our ' advocate with the Father ' is therefore a most comfortable word.

' Son.' So the ancient wise men were accustomed to address their disciples. Jesus being a young man and without any external credentials of authority did not commonly use a form of address so pompous. He did not

relish the correlative custom of addressing the teacher as Father—'Call no man father on earth' (Mt $23^{9}$). Hence we may expect to find a special pathos in this rare instance of Jesus' use of the word son, and in the only other instance which the Synoptic Gospels record—'Children, how hard it is' (Mk $10^{24}$). Once it is recorded that Jesus addressed a woman as 'daughter' (Mk $5^{34}$: 'Daughter, thy faith hath cured thee'). Twice the Fourth Gospel has affectionate diminutive terms meaning 'dear little children' (*teknia, paidia,* Jn $13^{33}$, $21^{5}$), the pathos being plainer in this case because such words have nothing to do with the solemn use of teachers. It is obviously appropriate that in assuring a man of the forgiveness of his sins Jesus should employ a term of address which at once expressed his sympathy and implied his authority.

In form, Jesus' speech was a *declaration*—that the man's sins were forgiven—forgiven, of course, by God. In the last resort it is only God's forgiveness that will satisfy a sinner. It is no small presumption for a man to act as God's spokesman. That is what the prophet claims, and no man can claim a higher authority. In their unspoken protest the scribes assumed that Jesus himself forgave. And they were right. No one can absolve a sinner without personally forgiving him. When a man of God says, 'I forgive thee,' then the sinner knows that he is forgiven by God—and only then. The personal form of the Catholic absolution, *ego te absolvo,* is not a corrupt following of the Apostles. *Delicta demitto, pacem do, communionem habeo,* I loose thee—such are the earliest formulas of absolution ecclesiastical history records; and there is no discrepancy between *them* and the evangelical tradition: 'Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them' (Jn $20^{23}$) and 'Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Mt $16^{19}$, $18^{18}$). Jesus in giving this charge to his disciples (who were men) evidently did not admit the maxim implied in the question of the scribes: 'Who can forgive sin but God only?' It is ominous to observe that Protestant Christendom nearly unanimously sides with the scribes against Jesus, affirming that it is blasphemy for a man to forgive sins. On the other hand it is significant

that an outsider like Oswald Spengler * recognizes the necessity of the sacrament of Penance, quotes Goethe's dictum that the people ought never to have been deprived of it, and affirms that for the lack of it many are brought to distraction or even utterly undone. It is necessary, he conceives, especially for the ' Faustic man.' But this quaint term of his hardly covers all the Jews and Gentiles who flock to the confessional of the psycho-analysts, and certainly not the thirty thousand or more savages somewhere off the coast of Sumatra who lately, in an amazing revival of religion, taxed the endurance of their German Protestant missionaries by their passionate eagerness to confess their sins. Lord Bacon's dictum is of universal application : ' Better relate yourself to a statua than suffer your thoughts to pass in smother.' Confession of *itself* is a relief. This strong cathartic is the only relief the psycho-analyst can offer—hence it is essential to his technique that he teach his patient to regard sin as a disease, a thing morally indifferent. The method of Christian Science, though it has no use for confession, comes to the same thing in the end—by the denial of evil. The popular, if not the prevailing religion of to-day is of this sort. Men have found a surrogate for absolution. ' Religion is the opiate of the people '—if Marx had applied his famous dictum to religions of this sort, he would have been altogether in the right. Spengler, according to his principles, has no clear right to offer any other relief but confession ; and he too seems to be feeling after the familiar substitute for absolution when he quotes *tout comprendre est tout pardonner* and describes this as ' a quasi-sacramental phrase.' Yet he acknowledges that no man can with full conviction absolve himself, and Kant's ' Every man his own priest,' he characterises as a joyless utterance.

We can appreciate now one of the singularities of this Gospel story : the paralytic was healed without confession —merely by absolution. That is a proof of the immense authority which Jesus assumed to exercise over men and did effectually exercise.

One of the commonest hieroglyphics of early Christian

* *Untergang des Abendlandes*, vol. ii, pp. 358 ff.

art is the picture of a man carrying on his back a light bed. So summary a representation sufficed to recall the story we are here dealing with. Roman archaeologists have been accustomed to regard it as a symbol of the sacrament of Penance. That would be an anachronism—and yet it is not far from the truth. Many instances were recorded of Jesus' power to heal the body, but this story was peculiarly precious as the only account preserved to us of an explicit sentence of forgiveness. We may suspect that the case was not so rare as the records make it appear. The nearest analogy is Jesus' treatment of the woman taken in adultery (Jn $7^{53}$–$8^{11}$), 'Neither do I condemn thee. Go in peace.' This story, which has every mark of genuineness, was not recorded in any of the canonical Gospels. Presumably it was written on the margin by some one who valued it, and by the carelessness of a scribe it was permitted to creep into the text. Since this story was so precariously preserved, others like it may have been suppressed for the reason that even the Evangelists were fearful lest Jesus' way of dealing with sinners might prove morally dangerous. However, the fact that Jesus forgave sinners has not been obscured. He declared it plainly enough when he consorted with them and invited himself to eat with them.

'Which is the easier thing?' The point is that *here* (as in ¶7. $1^{21-28}$) the 'authority' of Jesus' word as a teacher (prophet) is accredited by a manifest physical effect. 'Thy sins are forgiven' may for the sinner mean resurrection from the dead, whereas the onlooker may perceive no visible change. 'Rise, lift up your mattress, and go,' expects a change in the visible world. The challenge of Jesus' authority being thus frankly met and the test of it so boldly proclaimed, the man must have judged that he was not forgiven, if he had not felt the strength to rise. But he obeyed the impossible command: 'He arose, and lifted up his mattress at once, and went out before them all.' Therefore all were obliged to judge that Jesus spoke the word of forgiveness with no less authority. 'So all were astonished and glorified God, saying, We never saw anything like this before.'

'Glorified God for giving such power to men'—that is St. Matthew's conclusion of this story (9[8])—like St. Mark's but for one little change, to which perhaps he attached no great importance. But to us it is very illuminating, if we will stop to heed it. The crowds could in fact pass no other judgment than this upon what they had just seen and heard. Very properly they 'glorified *God*,' for Jesus never pretended to act by a power or authority which was independent of God. Yet it was *he* that acted, *he* was the agent as well in forgiving as in healing. He acted with superhuman authority, yet he was a man. No one in that crowd, not even his chosen disciples, had yet suspected that he was anything more, anything else than a man. They were aware that he was an extraordinary man—in spite of his ordinariness—but they had not yet tried to classify him. No one had thought yet of applying to him the title of prophet (Mt 21[11]). And no wonder, for he did not wear the 'hairy garment,' nor adopt a manner of life which would distinguish him from the common run of men. He wore his phylacteries like the average man—no broader. Therefore, if *he* exercised such power or authority (*exousia* means either or both), the people must conclude that God gave such power to *men*—not to one man only, chosen out of the whole race, and not of course to all men actually, yet to all men potentially.

It is in the light of these considerations, in view of this perspective, we must read the saying, '*But to let you know that the son of man has power to forgive sins on earth.*' As this is the first place where we encounter the term 'son of man' in St. Mark's Gospel, we must here consider the whole problem which it suggests.

When first it was remarked, not very long ago, that in Aramaic, the language which Jesus spoke, the phrase 'son of man' was not an unusual, a lofty, or a poetical expression, but simply the ordinary way of saying *man*—then the Humanists triumphed! They had Jesus' word for it—not that he was *a* man (that of course), but that he was '*the* man.' So he styled himself. That was his self-chosen designation. It could mean nothing else but the claim that he incorporated the qualities which properly and potentially

belong to man, each in the highest perfection and all in perfect equilibrium. (For Humanism has always been extravagant in its conception of the *perfection* of Jesus' humanity.) That is what he was, that was his sublime distinction—and that was all.

A short-lived triumph. For the precursors of the Eschatological School promptly pointed out that the title ' Son of Man,' just because it was used as a title (with the definite article), could be used with a particular significance, and was in fact used mysteriously as a designation of the Messiah in the Book of Enoch and in IV. Esdras, the most prominent examples that remain to us of Jewish apocalyptic after Daniel, and indicative of the expectations current in Jesus' day. Moreover, as soon as this was observed, it became evident that this use (and Jesus' use) of the mysterious designation ' Son of Man ' had reference to Daniel $7^{13}$, ' One came with the clouds of heaven like unto a son of man and came near unto the Ancient of Days.' Therefore *the* Son of Man (whether in Jewish apocalyptic or in the Gospels) was equivalent to *that* Son of Man—a being *like* men, indeed, in appearance (there was the paradox), but much more intimately associated in thought with the angelic powers, with ' the clouds of heaven,' and with ' the Ancient of Days.'

We need not consider in this place all the far-reaching consequences of this perception. But we cannot fail to remark here upon one revolutionary consequence. We have been taught to believe that Jesus' conflict with his people, their rejection of him, and his martyrdom was due to a misunderstanding : they conceived of the Messiah as a political ruler, while he interpreted the idea in a ' spiritual ' sense. Now we see that this was not true. Jesus' conflict with his contemporaries had little or nothing to do with differences of opinion about the Messianic ideal. The earliest expectation of the Messiah was clearly and predominantly, if not exclusively, a political ideal. It was the expectation of a kingly liberator on the throne of David. Something more grandiose may have been suggested by the Roman Empire—a Jewish *imperator* ! But *then* even that was not enough. The Messianic ideal had long before been

sublimated. It was not left to Jesus to do it. The people were commonly imbued with the new notion, and the Pharisees were the most zealous exponents of it. A 'spiritual' ideal? Perhaps too spiritual for us, for it was even angelical, almost to the verge of demigodism. In spite of the traditional Davidic sonship which persisted, and an element of vindictive nationalism which intruded, all were united in the belief that the coming of the Messiah was a cosmical event; and none of his hearers could have found fault with Jesus for his proof that the throne of David was too low a seat for the Messiah ($12^{35, 36}$), or for his assertion that the throne of God was not too high ($14^{62}$). It was not because he proclaimed so lofty an ideal of the Messiah that Jesus offended the rulers of his people —not for this was he put to death, but because he had the presumption to claim that he himself incorporated it. Astounding claim!—if we do not say, preposterous! No wonder he was put to death for it. And no wonder he never made the claim openly and clearly till he reckoned that his hour had come and gave the signal for his martyrdom. In no place and at no time could he have made such a claim with any hope of credence. It was a secret, revealed to the Three at the Transfiguration (Mk $9^{7}$, Mt $16^{17}$), divulged by Peter to the Twelve ($8^{29}$), and by Judas betrayed to the High Priest. Exception made of two passages which are about to engage our attention, and which I would interpret in another sense, St. Mark is scrupulous to represent that it was only after the Transfiguration (see ¶ 56) that Jesus spoke of himself as the Messiah, and then only by the mysterious designation 'Son of Man.'

The mystery of this name was an open secret to the intimate disciples after the Transfiguration; but in speaking to the multitudes, though he used the same term, Jesus spoke darkly. He did not expressly identify himself with the Son of Man, but spoke of him in the third person, claiming merely that this sublime Person, this 'most worthy Judge Eternal,' stood in a relation of perfect solidarity with *him*: 'Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this disloyal and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with

the holy angels' ($8^{38}$). It is amazing that St. Mark maintains as consistently as he does a sense for this perspective. Until the end, when Jesus proclaimed his 'blasphemy' before the High Priest, the crowds had no inkling that he took himself to be the Christ. Only the demoniacs recognized him (or rather the evil spirits which possessed them) —and who would heed the cries of these crazy men? Mark's writing does not reveal consummate art, still less consummate artfulness: therefore we are obliged to conclude that the perspective his Gospel maintains was the real perspective—that Jesus' claim to Messiahship was his secret.

But if the consistency of Mark is surprising, we have no reason to be surprised that Matthew and Luke are less consistent, that they frequently distort the perspective, even when their sources were true to the original point of view. Nothing could be more natural, for their point of view *was* another. Knowing Jesus as the Christ, it was difficult to relate the story of his life without calling him by that title. Characteristic of St. Matthew is a passage where St. Mark was his source: 'Who do people say that I *the Son of Man* am?' writes Matthew ($16^{13}$), whereas Mark has only 'I am.' Again, using another source which was true to the original perspective in showing that John the Baptist had no suspicion that Jesus was the Christ, Matthew writes ($11^{2}$), 'When John heard in prison about the deeds of Christ,' he sent his disciples to ask him if he might be the Forerunner ('the Coming One'). This is not surprising. It is surprising rather that the Synoptic Gospels as a whole bear so clear a witness as they do to the original situation. For they were all written at a time when the conflict between the disciples of Jesus and the Jews turned exclusively upon the question, 'Is he the Christ, or is he not?' It was difficult not to import that controversy into the earlier situation—as finally the Fourth Gospel did, abolishing all trace of perspective and representing that from first to last the people were agitated by the question whether Jesus were the Christ or not, every man being judged exclusively by his response to that question, by his faith that Jesus was the Christ or by his unbelief. You have to

make your choice between the Synoptists and St. John. And historically the choice is not a free one.

Yet there is substantial truth in this unhistorical account of the Fourth Gospel. Jesus was indeed the Christ even when men failed to recognize him. And even if 'in the days of his flesh' it was impossible for men to detect 'the Lord of Glory' in a man who lacked even earthly grandeur, nevertheless Jesus himself accounted that men were judged —judged eternally—by their attitudes towards him (Mk $8^{28}$, Mt $11^{6}$). It was very little he asked—not that men should understand him or detect who he was, but only that they should not be 'ashamed' of him, not 'scandalized' at him. He knew that men could not recognize him as the Christ till they had discovered that John the Baptist was the Forerunner—and with sagacity so great as that he hardly credited them: 'If you are willing to accept it, he himself is Elijah the Coming One. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!' (Mt $11^{14-15}$; *cp.* Mk $9^{11-13}$). The people did indeed recognize John as 'a prophet' (Mk $11^{32}$), but without suspecting that he might be *the* prophet that was expected before the coming of the Messiah.

'When evening comes, you say, "It will be fine, for the sky is red," and in the morning you say, "It will be stormy to-day, for the sky is red and cloudy." You know how to distinguish the look of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times.' This passage, which is an interpolation in St. Matthew ($16^{2, 3}$), is none the less surely a genuine saying of Jesus. He counted that people ought to have been alert to mark that something extraordinary was on foot. And though the miracles which he wrought were not such 'signs' as his critics demanded, and though they could not be supposed to prove to the incredulous that he was the Christ, they ought to have prompted men to recognize that the Kingdom of God was nigh at hand (Mt $12^{28}$). Those who had eyes to see and did not see were not without guilt for their blindness.

But the readers of the Gospels are not left in darkness about Jesus' Messiahship. They are told at the beginning what he is; for the Gospels were written for men who were Christians, who by his resurrection from the dead knew

Jesus to be the Christ. Hence the Evangelists do not gently lead their readers on to the discovery that this young artisan from Nazareth, who was regarded with wonder as a teacher, and finally acclaimed as a prophet, was in reality the Christ. The Synoptists recount no incident in his earthly life which might tend to substantiate such a claim—except the Transfiguration, which was witnessed by only three of his disciples under the strictest pledge of secrecy ($9^{9}$). Still less do the Evangelists represent that Jesus gradually became the Christ, or gradually became conscious that he was the Christ, or gradually sublimated and exalted his conception of Messiahship. To regard him as a man who *became* Christ would be hardly less absurd than to regard him as a man who *became* God. The Gospels give no countenance to the invention of his modern and psychologically minded biographers that there was a growth in Jesus' apprehension of his Messiahship. Before his baptism he was the Christ and knew it not: from that moment, because of a revelation from heaven, which (according to Mark) Jesus alone saw and heard, he knew with absolute certainty that he was the Christ, in the most sublime and exalted sense ('my Son, my Beloved'). There was no room for psychological development, but only for clarification of the enigma that as the Christ he was called upon to suffer and to die. From the beginning, such was his 'Messianic consciousness.' Astounding (if we do not say preposterous)—all too spiritual, too angelical, divine!

The Fourth Gospel is not untrue to realities but only to facts. It ignores the historical perspective (the description of what Jesus seemed to be) for the sake of interpreting him to the men of his generation (and to men of all times) as he was, as he *is*. The Evangelist did what every preacher must seek to do, what each of us must try to do for himself, namely, to interpret Jesus Christ as our 'contemporary.' Not without cause is the Fourth Gospel the favourite Gospel. But from the Synoptists too it ought to be plain to us that we cannot have Jesus of Nazareth without his claim to Messiahship. That was an integral part of him: he spoke with the consciousness of being the Christ, and he acted with that consciousness. His family, not possessing

this clue to his behaviour, judged that he was 'out of his mind,' and his enemies inferred that he was possessed by Beelzebul ($3^{21, 22}$). When it became known what he held himself to be, he was regarded not only as a madman but a blasphemer. Many now would prefer to exalt the 'Master' who taught men to live well and wisely—but this teacher himself lived so unwisely, treasuring an opinion of himself which was so presumptuous and absurd.

Without his consciousness of Messiahship you cannot have Jesus of Nazareth—nor without his eschatology. Even the Fourth Gospel, though it sought to eliminate the apocalyptic imagery which was associated with 'the Kingdom of God,' and therefore dropped that term in favour of 'Eternal Life,' did not suppress the essential term of Jesus' eschatology. 'Eternal Life' is not equivalent to the immortality of the soul, for it is correlative to the resurrection at the last day (Jn $6^{54}$). Without these absurdities you cannot have Jesus of Nazareth. 'Cannot,' of course, means here no more than 'cannot with good reason.' For it is clear that very many do make this separation. They like to describe it as a separation of the kernel from the husk. And they can appeal to the authority of distinguished critical scholars of our own time who are exponents of an uneschatological view of Jesus. But one must make clear how this view is gained by the distinguished modern scholars who are appealed to. For it is not any longer possible on the basis of traditional orthodoxy. It is not arrived at by an *interpretation* of the Gospels, but by *criticism* of the Gospels—with the intent of proving the assumption that the disciples after Jesus' death sought to glorify him by attributing to him a claim which in his lifetime he had never thought of making. This theory in its most consistent form assumes that the Evangelists were artful enough to represent the Messiahship as Jesus' secret (like a light which only occasionally escapes from the chinks of a dark lantern)—thus accounting for the fact that his whole life was lived as if he were not the Christ. This theory is more consistent than plausible; for the Evangelists are so inconsequent in their representation of the 'secret Messiahship' that for nearly two thousand years

their readers failed to discover it, and it looks rather as if they were dealing with a fact which they themselves hardly understood. At all events, this theory destroys so radically the historical integrity of the Gospels that there remains but a short step to the conclusion, only too plausible from this standpoint, that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth never existed.

So you cannot have Jesus without his claim to Messiahship. And not without his eschatology—for *his* idea of Messiahship was eschatological. His was a futuristic Messiahship. In a sense he was not yet the Messiah during the days of his flesh, for he lacked the visible glory which comported with that title. Hence another time, after the resurrection of the dead, he must appear in his proper glory, 'coming with the clouds of heaven,' and so he corrected every other name for Messiahship with his self-chosen designation, 'Son of Man,' which aptly expressed his conception—in the context of apocalyptical eschatology. Why is it we are loath to accept this, and rather than have Jesus as he was, would almost prefer to believe that he never existed at all except as a concrete expression of man's idealism? Is it because the apocalyptic imagery is too fantastic? But Jesus himself put an end to the extravagant fancies of Jewish apocalyptic. What we are dealing with here is the kernel, not the husk. Or is it because this conception is too spiritual, too angelical, too divine? We who like to use the word 'spiritual' use it commonly in a sense which is not Biblical, choosing to denote by it anything pertaining to the *human* spirit regarded abstractly, apart from its relation to the body, and then, more negatively still, anything we can conceive of as abstracted from all concrete relationships. In this sense Jesus was not 'spiritual,' for he was the *incarnation* of the divine Idea (Logos).

Now I have to say that this long disquisition about Jesus' idea of Messiahship has no connection with the passage we are *here* engaged in studying. It seemed necessary to discuss fully the significance of the Messianic title 'Son of Man' *here* where we first encounter it in St. Mark's Gospel.

But now it is time to express the conviction that in this connection the term was *not* used in a Messianic sense. We have seen that in Aramaic the phrase 'son of man' was equivalent simply to *man*. When the Gospel story was told in that language it could not be easy to determine in every instance whether the expression was used in the common sense or with the peculiar significance which Jesus attached to it. Not even the definite article would infallibly determine this question, for it might indicate only that the word was used generically. But, of course, a phrase so exotic as this, when it appears in our Greek Gospels, is never equivocal. There is no doubt that St. Mark uses it here as if it were the well-known Messianic title. But that was a slip, one of the *two* inconsistencies in his otherwise so coherent report that Jesus never clearly spoke of himself as the Son of Man till after the Transfiguration. We have no means of discovering how the Evangelist happened to make this slight blunder. It may have been made before him in the tradition which he received. And it might have been prompted, as was the indignation of the scribes, by the thought that a mere man could not without great presumption assume to forgive sins. At all events it is a slip we need not regret, for it goes to prove that St. Mark recorded artlessly a tradition the significance of which he did not clearly understand. The assertion then that this was the genuine tradition possesses a very high degree of probability. If it is true that in Galilee during those early days no one knew or suspected that Jesus took himself for the Christ, it is evident that his hearers must have supposed him to mean *man* simply and generically when he said 'son of man'; and it must be supposed that Jesus *meant* by this saying what his hearers (all of them) must have understood him to mean. Otherwise he was not really answering his critics —he might even be secretly in agreement with them. They said in effect, Man cannot forgive sins, but only God. And Jesus denied this roundly when he said, 'But to let you know that man has power to forgive sins.'

This thesis, which is associated with the names of Julicher and Wellhausen, does not any longer need to be sponsored by great authorities. Once it is stated, it is

luminous in its own light. The second instance to which it applies is found in the concluding verse of this same chapter ($2^{27, 28}$), and in that connection its meaning is still more abundantly clear. 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath: so that the son of man is master even over the sabbath.' Here the argument as well as the parallelism plainly requires that we read, 'So that *man* is lord even over the sabbath.'

One of the extra-canonical sayings plausibly attributed to Jesus recounts that when he saw a man labouring in the field on the Sabbath he said to him, 'If you know what you are doing, blessed are you; but if not, you are accursed.' According to this saying, it is not *every* man that is actually lord of the Sabbath, yet *any* man may attain to this authority. It is a question of insight, and that is a human potentiality. So it is with the forgiveness of sins. Jesus certainly did not mean to affirm that every man is actually in a position to forgive sins as by God's authority, or even in such wise as to give a sinner assurance of his pardon; but he does mean to say that this is a human potentiality. Clearly he does not here limit this authority to a particular class of persons, such as the office-bearers in the Church. The Church in the second century did not regard this as an authority belonging exclusively to bishops or priests, for at that time it was the martyrs who most conspicuously exercised the ministry of reconciliation by readmitting to their communion (that is, forgiving) brethren who had lapsed in time of persecution. They, like the bishops, could exercise such authority effectively, so far as social consequences were concerned, because they were *recognized* as approved exponents of Christianity. Who would decline to be in communion with a repentant sinner who was in communion with a martyr or with one's bishop? But so far as the assurance of divine forgiveness is concerned, any humble Christian can exercise this ministry of reconciliation, if only he is a genuine Christian and is recognized by the penitent to be such.

Jesus did not only bestow this authority upon his disciples as a privilege: he also imposed it upon them as a duty—and upon all of them. To all of them, surely, he

applies the frequent, heart-searching, and stern injunction that they must forgive their enemies. But that is only a particular instance of the forgiveness of sins. Jesus for his part did not stop with that: he was reproached for his inclination to forgive *sinners*—'This man receives sinners and eats with them!' That was a clear gesture of forgiveness. It was not his own enemies only he forgave, but other people's enemies and the enemies of God. Nor does it appear that he always waited for them to repent. Indeed the stories that are told of him seem to suggest that his grace more often 'prevented' than followed a sinner's repentance. It is not to be supposed that when Jesus exacted of his disciples the hardest sort of forgiveness he exempted them from the necessity of practising the easier sorts. 'Judge not, and you will not be judged yourselves: condemn not, and you will not be condemned: forgive, and you will be forgiven yourselves' (Lk $6^{37}$)—that expresses the matter in the most general terms—and it adduces a compelling reason for observing the precept. If in this respect we follow the maxim of 'doing what Jesus did,' we cannot err. The necessity of forgiving sinners is far more evident in our case than in his: he was capable of sympathizing with men's weaknesses, 'yet without sin' (Heb. $4^{15}$). Nor can we plead that it would be presumptuous of us to forgive other people's enemies (and even the enemies of God!), for Jesus has vindicated for man this authority.

'But,' some one will say, 'what has my forgiveness to do with forgiveness by God?' Much every way. And first negatively: it is almost impossible for a sinner to persuade himself that he might be forgiven by God when about him are men who, though they have so much reason to forgive, are hard, unmerciful, and unforgiving. Especially is it hard if he is not forgiven by the good people whom he must regard as God's representatives on earth, if God is at all represented. Then positively: it is a mysterious truth that a sinner who hears himself forgiven by a good man takes that human voice for the voice of God. 'A drowning man will clutch at a straw,' you say. Yes, he will. And this is a straw. 'Good man' can only

mean a sinner who is reconciled to God. Nevertheless, with that straw the sinner feels safe : ' God has given such power unto men.' And ordinarily there is no other way for a man to be saved. It is a dictum of Spengler's that ' no man can with full confidence of conviction absolve himself.' St. James ($5^{16}$) testifies that in the early days the sacrament of penance was not exclusively in the hands of bishops and presbyters.

In this case, to do what Jesus did is to do what he commanded us to do. The duty is plain, and it is enforced by tremendous sanctions. As a privilege it is stupendous —the authority of acting as God's vicars on earth. For God *is* represented on earth, and ' man has power to forgive sins *on earth*.' Yet so little cultivated among us is this quality of mercy which Jesus practised and enjoined that in our language there is no name in current use to denote it. An unnamed virtue is not likely to be practised or even kept in mind. That this virtue remains without a name among us may be due to our Puritan tradition. For Puritanism, wherever it has appeared, has amounted practically to a requisition that other people must be pure. As Puritans we may be inclined to think that the attitude I here have in mind is not a virtue but a weakness. However that may be, the Romance languages (French, Italian, and Spanish) have an appropriate name for the broad attitude of forgiveness which in our language I can only vaguely describe. They call it *indulgence*. That is a word which we put only to ignoble use ; on the one hand for describing the commonest means we employ for depraving children ; and, on the other, as the name for an ecclesiastical abuse which we especially abhor. Yet I know of no other word which we might so appropriately employ for naming the virtue I here have in mind.

It is remarkable that indulgence is not honourably mentioned among us at this time when tolerance is so much extolled. Tolerance or toleration has properly to do only with people's opinions, and indulgence, with their faults of character and conduct. The first, however much it is in repute among us, is a very questionable virtue. Neither reason nor revelation teaches us to be tolerant of false

opinions; whereas both reason and revelation require us to be indulgent of other people's faults.

What revelation teaches us we have just been considering. But reason too has very plain things to say on this subject. I first learned to appreciate the importance of indulgence when I read a chapter with that title in a book by Dr. Paul Dubois, *L'Éducation de Soi-même*. He does not write as an exponent of heavenly wisdom, but in his profession as a healer of psycho-neurosis he has learned how essential is this grace to the agent himself, if he would attain the calmness which is necessary to health. He expounds this theme therefore with eloquence and cogency, though he can plead only from the standpoint of a naturalistic determinism. It is one of the best sides of Christian Science that it inculcates this virtue—for the sake of health. If a man can forgive his own sins—explaining them away by determinism or ascribing them to 'an error of mortal mind'—he is obviously bound for the same reason to be indulgent towards others. Of us something more positive is required, if we recognize the fact of responsibility and guilt; but so far as we are interested in our health and happiness we have here and now the same motive to exercise indulgence, and we have a more compelling motive when we know the sanctions which threaten our happiness beyond the grave.

For me this whole matter is symbolized by the words which were inscribed over the portal of a sequestrated monastery which was for a while my home: INDULGENTIA PLENARIA QUOTIDIANA PERPETUA PRO VIVIS ET DEFUNCTIS. I should not have thought of making a broad application of this common ecclesiastical privilege, were it not for the chance that a distinguished friend, coming to lunch with me and arriving half an hour late, and remembering that such a thing had happened to her before, looked at this inscription and exclaimed, 'But here I find plenary indulgence!' Then, remembering the past offence, she said, 'But even you could not forgive me if I should fail again.' And I, pointing to the inscription, and with tears in my eyes for joy that God had given such power unto men, repeated the next following words: 'Daily and for ever.' In this

inscription, so applied, not even the words, ' for the living and for the dead,' are superfluous. It is as much our duty to forgive the dead as the living, and it may be that the dead, if they have sinned against us, are not perfectly forgiven without our pardon.

I have here been using the word indulgence very broadly, as applying not to sins only but to trifling faults. I would apply it even more broadly still—to mere peculiarities and differences. That people should be different from us—have different tastes and different customs—we find it hard to forgive, because we rarely realize the necessity of making the effort.

¶ 13. The Call of Levi.

Mk $2^{13-17}$. **And he went out again along the sea, and the whole crowd came to him, and he taught them. [14]And as he passed along he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax-office, and he said to him, ' Follow me,' and he got up and followed him. [15]And Levi had a dinner in his house, and many tax-gatherers and sinners were there as guests along with Jesus and his disciples,—for there were many [of that sort], and they followed him. [16]And some of the scribes of the Pharisaical party, seeing that he was eating with sinners and tax-gatherers, said to his disciples, ' Why does he eat and drink with tax-gatherers and sinners ? ' [17]And hearing this, Jesus said to them, ' Those who are well do not need the physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call righteous people but sinners.'**

Here we have another instance of the opposition which Jesus encountered in Galilee. And it is time now to observe that the whole of this section (comprising chapters 3 and 4) deals with the rising tide of opposition. When we observe further that chapter 4 is devoted to parables it becomes evident that in this part of his Gospel the Evangelist has arranged his material topically rather than in an historical order. This might seem to justify Papias' saying that St. Mark did not set things down in the correct ' order.' But presumably Papias objected rather to the sequences which most clearly purported to be chronological, and

probably he was prejudiced by the tradition established in Asia Minor by the Fourth Gospel. At all events, this is the only section of St. Mark's Gospel which does not profess to relate events in their historical order; and if St. Mark does not in the main relate events in their historical order, we have no clue at all to the actual sequences in the life of Jesus. The authors of the two later Synoptical Gospels (Matthew and Luke) evidently knew of no narrative that they could prefer to St. Mark's, and therefore they adhere to his order in all but minor particulars. Such being the case, it behoves us to weigh with the utmost care and caution the historical value of St. Mark's account. Having no other account—that is to say, no external measure for determining its accuracy—we can judge it only by its intrinsic plausibility and internal coherency.

It is necessary now to lift our eyes from the immediate text and to take a broad view of the story of Jesus' last year as it was recounted by St. Mark and repeated, without essential variations, by St. Matthew and St. Luke. The Table of Contents prefixed to this volume furnishes a synopsis which conforms faithfully to the account of the Evangelist. The story is obviously divided into three major parts: (1) heralding in Galilee, by word and deed, the Gospel of the Kingdom; (2) retirement with the Twelve into heathen territory, concluding with the revelation of Jesus' Messiahship; (3) the journey to Jerusalem and the conflicts there which led to his death. If, as I have said, we must judge this story by its internal plausibility and inherent consistency, it appears as if the verdict must be against it. For these three parts do not seem to hang together; no obvious thread unites them; and the Evangelists do not take the pains to tell us (if they themselves knew) what motives prompted Jesus to leave Galilee for a long period of fruitless wandering, or what led him finally to Jerusalem. Instead of obvious historical continuity, we have a series of historical discontinuities, which extends to several of the minor divisions of the narrative. Therefore, to make the story specious, the modern constructors of the life of Jesus have been obliged to make their own assumptions—to invent reasons for Jesus' behaviour. Familiar to

us and fundamental to all these constructions is the division of the life of Jesus into two periods: a period of success and happiness in Galilee, then the period of conflicts, unpopularity, and disillusionment, which resulted in the resolution to try his fortune at Jerusalem—with the most conspicuous ill success. It is against such assumptions as this that Albert Schweitzer directed his attack. But he remarks justly that they had already fallen to the ground by reason of their own inherent inconsistencies and the stubborn resistance they encountered in the text which they professed to explain. These theories being discredited, the historical discontinuities of the narrative are again obvious and glaring. From the various situations, as they are depicted in the text of the Gospels, the pragmatic results which we might expect do *not* follow. This renders the conclusion plausible that the narrative is fictitious, and even suggests the doubt whether such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed.

It is the merit of Schweitzer's ' thoroughgoing eschatology ' that it constructs more tenable assumptions, which are supported by the text of the Gospels and, on the other hand, go a long way towards rehabilitating the credit of the text, which had been deeply undermined by the effort of the prevalent theories to maintain themselves in spite of the evidence. The theories lately prevalent were, as a matter of course, psychological and evolutionary. They assumed a psychological development in Jesus, and of course they applied to him the psychological measurements of the average man—thus determining, *a priori*, the outcome of the whole investigation, since the very assumptions involve the conclusion that Jesus was an ordinary man, distinguished from the rest of us by his ' religious genius,' but like the rest of us swayed by circumstances and guided by opportunity. He left Galilee when his popularity was waning; after months of fruitless wandering he went to Jerusalem in the hope of finding there a better opportunity; and there his high-flown idealism was shattered in conflict with the bitter facts of life. This is a possible picture of the man, if it were not for the facts which (rightly or wrongly) are recorded in the Gospels—to mention only the

fact that he left Galilee at the height of his popularity and that on the way to Jerusalem he disclosed to his disciples his purpose of going there to die. It agrees better with the facts rightly or wrongly recorded in the Gospels to assume that Jesus was in reality a superior person, a very extraordinary man, who was not the slave of events as we are, but dealt sovereignly with facts and moulded them to his purpose. It is not the least of Jesus' miracles that he succeeded in being put to death, not obscurely by the hand of an assassin, but openly and with every form of law, as a man rejected by his nation and by the world. This assumption implies that in all that he said and did—in great matters as well as little—Jesus' action was determined by his secret consciousness of Messiahship. If he went up to Jerusalem to suffer, it was because ' it behoves the Christ to suffer.' If he left Galilee, it was for some similar secret reason of his own, which probably the disciples never understood. Clearly, the story of such a man must abound in apparent inconsequences. What binds it together as a whole is only the Messianic consciousness of Jesus. But this is not a theory invented to explain why he departed from Galilee, why he went up to Jerusalem, or why he did this and that : it is an assumption which is necessary to explain why in the first instance he stood forth to proclaim : ' The time is fulfilled, God's reign has drawn near ; repent, and have faith in the Gospel.'

When we turn from these general considerations to the section of the Gospel which now and for some time to come must engage our attention, we can observe how fictitious is the assumption of the early happy and successful days in Galilee. St. Mark devotes two chapters to an account of the conflicts in which Jesus was engaged by the swelling tide of opposition. We are left to conjecture what darker experiences in the towns which witnessed his most triumphant activities may have moved Jesus to his terrible denunciation of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Mt $11^{21-23}$). But these conflicts which Mark records were bitter enough. The last charge especially (' He has Beelzebul,' $3^{22-29}$) offended him deeply, as is clear from his response on that

occasion, and from the fact that he recalled it later to his disciples (' If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul,' Mt $10^{25}$). It is true that in the disputes which St. Mark reports Jesus was not worsted by his adversaries. His replies, sometimes backed by deeds, were incontrovertible. But he proved himself no less superior in the last conflicts before leaving Galilee and in the conflicts at Jerusalem. It is true that Jesus' replies did not disarm the opposition. We get the impression that it was growing, in mass and in intensity and in authority—for the last opponents were ' scribes from Jerusalem.' Nothing but surrender could disarm the opposition ; for Jesus perceived that his adversaries opposed him not because they misunderstood his purpose, but because they were beginning to understand it. They were the enemies of the Gospel. Hence Jesus answered them squarely and in a tone which did not suggest conciliation. But if the opposition was growing apace, Jesus' popularity was increasing at a greater rate. There is an evident historical progress even in this typical series of oppositions. The last was the most bitter. But there are also indications of Jesus' increasing popularity. It seems as if the two paragraphs in this section which have nothing directly to do with opposition were introduced here, in their proper historical sequence, for the sake of explaining why the opposition suddenly increased in virulence and in extension. Jesus' amazing cures which brought to him a great number of people ' from Judaea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, the other side of the Jordan, and the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon ' ($3^{7-12}$), explain the presence of ' scribes who had come down from Jerusalem ' ($3^{22}$) to oppose him ; and this success, along with his appointment of the Twelve ($3^{13-19}$), explains the bitterness of the opposition. His own family finally concluded that he was mad, and the central authority felt obliged to act, at least by informal emissaries, when it became clear that this man had a programme, and was forming a society symbolically organized to include all Israel.

' Levi.' The Gospel which bears St. Matthew's name calls this disciple Matthew (Mt $9^{9}$), though it evidently

derives the story from St. Mark. And this is plausible, for we hear no more of a disciple named Levi, whereas Matthew appears in St. Mark's list of the Apostles ($3^{18}$) and (not to mention the Gospel of St. Luke, which here agrees with St. Mark) in the list which St. Luke gives in the Acts. That this Levi is said to be ' son of Alphaeus ' adds nothing whatever to our knowledge. It is a fact of only curious interest that in all four lists of the Apostles there is a certain James who was ' son of Alphaeus.' But this is not the place to break our heads over the Apostle-lists, nor when we reach the passage where discussions of this sort may seem appropriate shall I encourage the reader to wrestle with insoluble problems.

Matthew is not mentioned in the New Testament except in this story of his call and in the traditional lists of the Apostles. But he is highly honoured by the circumstance that he gives his name to the Gospel which stands first in the Canon. And if this attribution is in a measure justified by the fact that Matthew (according to the ancient tradition transmitted by Papias) committed to writing a collection of the sayings of Jesus, which presumably constitutes the core of this Gospel, we cannot but have a lively interest in the story of his call. It was a happy choice.

It may be that Levi's (Matthew's) call was not so late as the narrative would lead us to suppose. For Mark evidently mentions it here because it involved controversy with the scribes. We may even suspect that he might not have mentioned it at all were it not for this sequel. ' And he went out again along the sea ' refers back to the call of the first four disciples.

' Tax-office.' This is the first passage where publicans and sinners are mentioned. The first means tax-gatherer. The second word must be interpreted broadly as meaning irreligious persons. And so it might be translated in this passage, were it not for the last verse, which requires the full strength of the word : ' I did not come to call righteous people but sinners.' The people whom the Pharisees stigmatized as ' sinners ' were not for the most part evil-doers, but simply non-practising Jews, people who had given up trying to perform the ritual precepts of the Law, which

required a degree of freedom and leisure which the poor hardly had, and which, as Jesus complains, were made more heavy and grievous by the interpretations of the Pharisees. Tax-gatherers were not another class alongside of the 'sinners': they were simply the most hated examples of that class. It is always disagreeable to pay taxes, in whatever form they are levied, and it must be exceedingly galling when the tax is substantially a tribute to a foreign oppressor. For 'practising' Jews the situation was doubly hard; for, in addition to the oppressive taxes which Rome levied, and which were made more onerous by the unscrupulous exactions of the tax-gatherers, they still continued to pay their national taxes, because *they* were prescribed by the divine Law. Tithes were a ten per cent. income-tax, and besides that there were occasional sacrifices prescribed, and there were free-will offerings. But the Jews' objection to paying tribute to Caesar was something deeper than this. It was grounded in the conception that the land which Jahve had given their fathers to possess it still remained essentially Jahve's possession, and to pay tribute to Rome was to acknowledge Caesar's possession of the land which was properly Jahve's. Hence the sharp antithesis: God or Caesar. And hence the form of the question that was once put to Jesus: 'Is it *lawful* to pay tribute to Caesar?' (Mk $12^{15}$), *i.e.* is it consistent with the divine Law? Hence their scorn and hatred for the tax-gatherers, who, though they were Jews, sided with the oppressor and compelled their brethren to sin.

Jesus, with his customary perversity, saw in this most incriminating circumstance an appeal to his compassion: 'Forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.' This he said of Zacchaeus (Lk $19^{9}$), 'head of the tax-gatherers,' and because of that perception he did not scorn to number Levi among his chosen disciples. And Levi did not hesitate to give up all and follow Jesus—ceasing to be a tax-gatherer. He was, in fact, the first of the disciples who irrevocably abandoned his worldly profession. For the fishermen could return to their boats, and according to a tradition appended to the Fourth Gospel they did do so after the Crucifixion. But one who had thrown up his job in the Roman bureau-

cracy could not return to it. ' Got up ' indicates that he then and there relinquished his post.

The impetuosity with which the disciples answered Jesus' call would occasion neither incredulity nor surprise were we to reflect how eager young men are to throw themselves with a whole heart into a cause which appeals to their imagination. Masterless men of middle age may prefer to remain their own masters, but youth is restless for want of a master who appears to them worthy of their allegiance. And this, we must remember, was a ' youth movement.' Jesus himself was a young man, and even if persons older than he were among his larger following, it is not likely that he called men as old as he to be his disciples.

' And Levi had a dinner '—so we must interpret (as Luke does) a phrase which literally reads, ' and it came about that he was seated [*at table* is to be understood] in his house.' As a chosen disciple it was a matter of course that he should henceforth eat with his teacher, and perhaps it was not presumptuous of him to invite Jesus to a banquet at his house—in spite of the fact that he had been a tax-gatherer. For he was that no longer, and henceforth he was not to be a ' sinner ' but a practising Jew, according to Jesus' liberal and ethical interpretation of the Law. But perhaps Jesus, aware of the diffidence such a man might feel, invited himself to dinner, as he did in the case of Zacchaeus. At all events, the acceptance of this man's hospitality was the gesture by which Jesus expressed his forgiveness of the tax-gatherer. Even the adversaries might have found no plausible occasion for criticism in the fact that Jesus ate with an ex-sinner.

But so much banqueting was in itself a ground of offence. I believe I do not exaggerate when I affirm that there is no work of history or fiction which in so brief a compass says so much as the Gospels do about eating and drinking. Jesus himself reports dryly that his enemies denounced him as a ' gluttonous man and a wine-bibber ' (Mt $11^{19}$). This convivial life which he led explains why he was most vividly remembered in the sacrament of eating and drinking. It appears as if he expected his disciples to remember him at every meal (1 Cor. $11^{25}$).

It was an incidental concomitant of this banquet which caused a scandal. St. Mark relates that ' many tax-gatherers and sinners were there as guests along with Jesus and his disciples ' ; and to explain how they happened to be there he remarks that ' there were many [of that sort], and they followed him.' When was there a time and a place where there were *not* many irreligious persons ? Probably Mark was not interested in asserting this truism, but would give us to understand that many people of this sort were accustomed to follow Jesus about. That is what interests us —to learn that his following, in the broader sense, was largely made up of irreligious persons. It is likely that before this banquet in the house of Levi he had not eaten with such persons, having had no occasion to do so. But these people would feel no embarrassment in following him to the house of Levi, who being himself a sinner and a tax-gatherer was an acquaintance of their own class, if not a familiar friend.

It is not possible that ' some of the scribes of the Pharisees ' were guests at this banquet, for then they too would be eating with sinners. We must suppose that it was, as outsiders, and after the event they expressed their criticism—not directly to Jesus, for he inspired too much awe, but to his disciples : ' Why does he eat and drink with tax-gatherers and sinners ? ' ' Scribes of the Pharisees ' is a phrase which aptly reminds us that not all Pharisees were scribes, neither were all scribes Pharisees. Scribes were persons who made it their business to be learned in the Scriptures ; and inasmuch as the interpretation of the Law was their most practical concern, they were known also as ' lawyers.' Except for this passage there is no suggestion in the Gospels that there might be scribes who were not of the Pharisaical party. Naturally enough, for it was commonly with such scribes Jesus found himself in conflict. In principle he agreed with the Sadducees in the interpretation of the Law. He was no more inclined than they to admit the legitimacy of the additions the Pharisees made under the guise of interpretation ; and if the Sadducees were moved by considerations of expediency (and perhaps by a tincture of Epicurean philosophy) to interpret the

Law liberally, Jesus, for very different reasons, dared to be more liberal than they. For if at times he spoke as if life depended upon the literal fulfilment of the Law (Mt $5^{17-20}$, Lk $16^{17}$), we have other sayings which reveal his sense of superiority, not to the letter only but to the spirit of the old Law (Mt $5^{27-48}$). There was only one point in which he sided with the Pharisees against the Sadducees ; but that was on a question of no less importance than belief in the resurrection of the dead (*cp.* Acts $23^{6-8}$). That meant agreement with the Pharisees in a matter of capital importance, for it involved the whole conception of apocalyptic eschatology. It was only on this question that Jesus came into intellectual conflict with the Sadducees, and the representatives of that party who sought to dispose of Jesus' doctrine of the resurrection by a *reductio ad absurdum* might not ineptly have been designated as some scribes of the Sadducees (Mk $12^{18-23}$). On that occasion Jesus proved himself a better scribe than they, convicting them of their ignorance of the Scriptures.

In the text we are now studying Jesus does not answer the scribes on their own ground, as scribe to scribe. He appeals to common sense, citing a proverb which was possibly not strange to his hearers. The Greeks at all events had similar proverbs.

Whether or not this saying was common enough to be called a proverb, we can properly speak of it as a parable ; and inasmuch as this is the first parable we encounter in the Gospel of St. Mark, we must halt here till we have learned what a parable is. One who has not faced this question will be inclined to think that the answer is easy. But a hasty definition would probably exclude the parable we are here dealing with, because it is not so denominated in this place, nor introduced by a formal suggestion of comparison. On the other hand it would be likely to include improperly the allegory of the Good Shepherd (Jn $10^{1-6}$), not only because it is called a ' parable ' in our English versions, but also because we have not been taught to distinguish between parable and allegory. For this reason we fail to note the amazing fact that St. John's Gospel contains not one single parable, whereas the Synoptic

Gospels affirm (with some exaggeration) that Jesus taught exclusively by means of parables (Mk $4^{34}$).

To understand what a parable is we must first of all distinguish it from allegory. The two things have nothing in common except that both call attention to some point of *likeness* which affords a basis for comparison. The allegory, however, exploits this element of likeness in one way, and the parable, in a very different way. The distinction is the same as between metaphor and analogy. The allegory is merely a metaphor expanded into a story. Both metaphor and allegory can properly be called figurative modes of expression ; for the figure or image which they employ does not mean what it seems to mean, and is not valued for its own sake but only for its suggested likeness to something else. In an artfully constructed allegory every principal term may correspond to something in the other sphere which the story purposes to illustrate. For this reason an allegory requires interpretation. Not always, however, a difficult or elaborate interpretation. The perfect allegory which Nathan related to King David (2 Sam. $12^{1-7}$) was at once perfectly interpreted when he said, ' Thou art the man.' The allegory is suggestive only of a superficial likeness and cannot be employed for proof, but only for the imaginative adornment of an idea. It belongs, like the metaphor, to poetry.

The parable, on the other hand, being an example of the analogical argument, is properly used for the proof of a proposition and belongs to the style of popular oratory. A parable that needs to be explained or interpreted utterly fails of its purpose : it must be clear or it is not cogent. Moreover, it must refer to a situation or relationship which is common (like the patching of a garment), or at least commonly reflected upon (like the conduct of kings), if it is to illuminate a subject which is less familiar or not directly open to observation (like the ways of God or the nature of the Kingdom of heaven). Analogical proof is only in place when we pass from the known to the unknown, from familiar judgments to subjects rarely reflected upon. It is not the individual pictures contained in the parable that are important, but the relationship which subsists

between them, the situation as a whole in which one detects a principle or law which is seen to apply to both terms of the comparison. For this reason every feature of a parable must be understood in its natural sense, and the situation as a whole must be real or at least plausible. Otherwise the parable would not avail to prove the truth of a principle which we must regard as applicable to the world of reality. The effectiveness of a parable is not dependent, however, upon the congruity of its terms with the subject it illustrates. God's interest in lost sinners is illustrated not only by the near analogy of a father's yearning for a lost son, but also by the remote analogy of an avaricious woman seeking her lost coin. There is here a wide difference in pathos (the shepherd seeking his lost sheep being intermediate in this scale), but there is no difference at all with respect to their cogency as proof of the psychological law that attention is naturally concentrated upon the things one has lost. In fact, a parable is often more effective when the analogy is not close, for then the law which it illustrates is seen to be far-reaching. I am speaking now of the analogy which may or may not exist between the several *terms* of the parable and the *terms* of the situation it pretends to illustrate. With regard to the *principle* which is illustrated by the parable, that, of course, must be clearly analogical—must in fact be seen to be identical—with the principle which governs the case in question. If the analogy between the terms is very close, we may be disturbed by the hint of allegory. In the limiting case, represented by the ' parable ' of the Good Samaritan, we have neither a parable nor an allegory, but simply an example.

It is evident that there are many sorts of parable in the Gospels, and it would be pedantic to deny this name to any of them. A parable expressed in a long story is not different in character or effect from the briefest picture of a situation. All that we can properly expect of a parable is the proof of a principle. If, as is common in the Gospels, several parables are educed to confirm the same principle, our confidence in it is enhanced—whereas more than one allegory used to illustrate the same truth would be evidently superfluous. The effect of a parable *as such* is not enhanced by

the shimmer of allegory which sometimes attaches to it. That may bestow upon it ' a parasitical sublimity ' (to use a quaint phrase of Ruskin's), but is likely to distract attention from the proper point. Such a mixture of parable and allegory we find not infrequently in the Gospels, and we have no good reason for attributing this trait always to the Evangelists rather than to Jesus—as Julicher would do for the sake of maintaining his too narrowly perfect definition of a parable. Jesus was not a purist. But we shall see as we proceed that this mingling of two kinds does not require us to interpret the parable allegorically. The parable retains its proper force as a parable, while in addition to this, and altogether apart from it, we can estimate the significance of the allegorical reference.

In view of the foregoing definition, it is evident that we are dealing *here* with a perfect parable : ' Those who are well do not need the physician, but those who are sick.' If hitherto it has not occurred to us to regard this as a parable, the reason is that we expect the Evangelist to designate it clearly as such, either by giving it this name, or by introducing it with some such phrase as ' the Kingdom of God is like.' But perhaps even the fact that St. Luke applies this name to the saying, ' Physician, heal thyself,' may not suffice to convince us that this shortest of all parables is properly a parable ; and in spite of the most elaborate suggestion of comparison (' Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation and to what are they like ? ') we may fail to recognize that the ' children sitting in the market-place ' are used as a parable. In fact, a parable need not always be enunciated in words ; it may be visible rather than audible, needing only to be pointed out with the finger. In the nature of the case, such parables are seldom transmitted. The ' barren fig tree,' however, is an example (Mk $11^{2-14}$).

Down almost to our day it was the constant practice of Biblical commentators to interpret allegorically the parables of Jesus. It must be confessed that this practice corresponds to the theory of the Evangelists. This theory is unequivocally expressed by St. Mark ($4^{10-12}$ ; *cp.* $^{33, 34}$) and in the Synoptic parallels. To his ' adherents along with

the Twelve' Jesus says, 'The secret of the Kingdom of God is granted to you, but to those outsiders everything is presented in parables, in order that [in the words of Isaiah $6^{9, 10}$]—

> They may look and look and yet not see,
> Listen and listen and yet not understand,
> Lest they should turn and be forgiven.'

It cannot be counted impossible that Jesus, in some connection or another, may have quoted this sombre saying. It might have been applied appropriately to his parables, as a reflection upon the fact that the people failed to understand him, though he spoke about the Kingdom of God with all the clearness that the subject allowed of. For it was a *fact* that they did not understand—the disciples themselves being no exception to the rule. He did not expect to be understood by all. Hence he concluded his parables with the refrain: 'Who has ears to hear, let him hear.' The Kingdom is represented as Jesus' secret—not, however, a secret which he was desirous of keeping dark, but one which he could not succeed in making men see, in spite of his instructive parables. Within that secret was hidden the secret of his Messiahship (which he did not seek to illustrate by parables), and within that again, the secret that the Messiah must suffer and die (upon which prophecy alone shed sufficient light). But prophecy also threw light upon the awful fact that men would not see and hear. In that hardening of the heart and darkening of the understanding the Prophets teach us to apprehend a divine dispensation. Jesus did not need to learn this from St. Paul.

What we cannot admit is the notion that Jesus intentionally concealed his thought by expressing it only in parables, for fear the people might apprehend the truth and be saved. Could any more monstrous intention be attributed to a saviour? We can understand the amiable motive of the Evangelists, who, by this device, sought to magnify the authority of the Apostles as men who had received from the Lord esoteric instruction. It should be recognized, too, that the familiar use of the word parable

in Hebrew might seem to justify their conception of it. Prov. $1^{6}$ associates the ' parable ' with ' dark sayings,' and St. John, who doubtless had the same Hebrew word in mind, represents the disciples as saying, ' Now speakest thou plainly and speakest no parable ' ($16^{29}$).

But the theory of the Evangelists is sufficiently condemned by the fact that it evidently does not apply to the majority of the parables which they themselves record. Nor does it agree with their own practice, for they give an allegorical interpretation only of the parables of the sower and of the tares. Rather it is Jesus himself who interprets this parable, and the implication is that the human understanding unaided by revelation is incapable of interpreting any parable ($4^{13}$). If commentators had modestly heeded this warning, we would have been spared their many and fantastic interpretations. As a matter of fact, it hardly seems as if the interpretation of the parable of the sower ($4^{14-20}$) were out of the reach of unaided human reason. It does not reveal any secret of the Kingdom, but merely reflects upon an all too familiar experience of the Church at a later period. We may suspect that it is not *the* interpretation of the parable, does not reveal to us what Jesus was eager to make known, the secret which remained hid in the parable because men were not ' able to receive it.' As for the other parables, it is assumed by the Evangelists that they shine by their own light and need no interpretation. Even the allegory of the vineyard ($12^{1-12}$) was understood promptly by the Pharisees, against whom it was uttered.

It must be confessed that the parables reported in the Gospels are *to us* often obscure. That may be because to us the situation to which they are addressed is not clear, or because the customs to which they refer are unfamiliar. That does not mean that they need to be interpreted, but only that they need to be explained—to us who are remote in place and time and have to rely upon the instruction of history and archaeology. The parable we have now to comment upon is one of the clearest, and we must presume that its force was at once felt by the hearers. No archaeology is necessary to make it clear to us : we have only to

represent to ourselves the situation in which Jesus found himself and the precise charge which his enemies were making against him. Familiar proverbs of our own will best convey to us the sinister suspicions of Jesus' adversaries when they found him in the company of irreligious people, and actually eating with them. ' Birds of a feather flock together,' we might say ; or, ' A man is known by the company he keeps.' There is at least one exception, remarked Jesus ; it is the physician. Commentators refer to several Greek proverbs which would be very apposite in this connection. They are to the effect that because a physician is found in the company of sick people we do not presume that he is sick, nor even that he is in danger of contracting disease. Jesus formulated his parable differently, for the sake, evidently, of throwing into relief the analogy between physician and saviour :

> Those who are well do not need the physician, but
> those who are sick.
> I did not come to call righteous people but sinners.

With that, the parable is wholly explained, and it obviously needs no interpreting. But when we have mastered the form of this parable (and thus learned to ' know all parables ') it remains to estimate its *weight*. That indeed is prodigious, for Jesus here strikes the key-note of his Gospel. Not for the first time, for already he had shown himself a saviour by healing the sick, by casting out demons, by presuming to forgive sins, by calling a tax-gatherer to be his disciple, and by eating with irreligious people. Now, however, he clearly enunciates this as his programme—giving us also to understand (if we can receive it) what is the essence of the Christianity of Christ. A distinguished German historian (Holl) lately rediscovered the fact that this was precisely the characteristic distinction of Jesus and his teaching. This was not simply the generic doctrine of salvation, the belief that God saves sinners. For at that the Jews could take no offence. It was precisely the affirmation that God loves and saves them *as sinners*, without waiting for them to become righteous and deserving of salvation. If it is reasonable to seek for the

distinction of Jesus' 'religion' at the point where it contrasts and conflicts with the religion of Israel, we evidently find it here. Not the Pharisees alone, but the Jewish people as a whole, comprising Sadducees, 'Herodians,' and whatever other parties there were, reprobated this teaching and felt obliged to oppose it. Not only did it rudely conflict with the traditions of their religion (and, we may add, with the specific quality of all religion), but it seemed to threaten the foundations of morality. For this cause therefore Jesus was opposed and persecuted and put to death. The Jews opposed him, not because they failed to understand him, but because they understood only too well. They perceived that he inverted the self-evident maxim of their theology (Prov. $15^{29}$) that—

> The Lord is far from the wicked,
> But he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

The three parables concerning lost things (Lk 15) are adduced to prove that God our Saviour, as though the field of his attention might be limited like man's, is inclined to forget the righteous because he is intent upon saving sinners. It is evidently a beneficent provision that the attention of man and of all animals is narrowly absorbed by a bodily pain which gives warning of a disorder which must be attended to, if life is to be preserved. It is no less evidently an optimistic theology which affirms that God likewise feels intensely, as if it were his own pain, every disorder in the world, so that he must be intent to resolve it. 'Where there's a will there's a way' is a proverb questionably applied to man—but not to God, with whom all things are possible. But this optimistic theology was so new that it seemed to be dangerous. It seemed a parody of the old belief as expressed in Psalm $34^{15}$—as though Jesus had proclaimed:

> The eyes of the Lord are towards the unrighteous,
> And his ears are open unto their cry.

Even more plainly was *morality* endangered by this doctrine—as the Pharisees were prompt to perceive. This also was the ground of their complaint against St. Paul.

His doctrine of justification by faith, apart from the works of the Law (*i.e.* the salvation of sinners as such), seemed to imperil morality and certainly contravened the tendency of all natural religion. I mean by this the tendency of all *religions*; for all religions are *natural* (human, all-too-human), and their symbol is the Tower of Babel, the pride of self-help, or at least semi-autosalvation. 'God,' says St. Paul (Rom. $5^{8}$), 'proved his love for us by the fact that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' Those of us who have heeded the popular cry, 'Away from St. Paul and back to Jesus,' must be disconcerted at discovering *there* where our quest is directed the same thing we had rejected —the absolute salvation of sinners, 'that no flesh should glory in God's presence.'

This was substantially 'the offence of the Gospel,' and it was a scandal not only to the Jews but also to the Greeks. Christianity seemed to the Greeks a poor-spirited religion —because it implies that man cannot save himself or do anything to deserve salvation. But also it seemed, to all persons who prized virtue, a menace to morality. Hence 'not many wise men according to the flesh' were enrolled in the Church, 'not many leading men, not many well-born' (1 Cor. $1^{26}$). St. Paul might have added, not many righteous according to the flesh. That was natural; for persons who enjoy the flattery of their fellow-men are not likely to think meanly of themselves; and baptism implies a profound humiliation. The Church was evidently meant for sinners, and no one would be inclined to join it who conceived that he was not in that class.

We have formed so dark a picture of the moral corruption of the Graeco-Roman world in the first centuries of the Empire, and are so accustomed to think of Christianity as a moral reformation, that it seems incredible to us that the Church could then have been regarded as a moral peril. But Celsus, that most astute critic, enables us to see with how much reason the Church was despised by philosophical observers in the second century. Not only because it inculcated a 'slave-morality' (to use Nietzsche's apt word), a pusillanimous notion that man is unable to save himself. The complaint went even deeper than that, being aimed

against the very essence of Christianity, the impious presumption that in the Church even sinners can be saved. Celsus extols the mystery cults for the lofty tone they use in inviting men to their initiations: 'He that hath clean hands and is wise of speech,' or, 'Whoever is free from all defilement, whose mind is conscious of no guilt, who has lived well and wisely.' Such, presumably, were the ritual forms actually in use; and this is precious information, because it enables us to see what sort of 'salvation' was offered by these most popular institutions of paganism. We see at least that it was not salvation from sin, inasmuch as no sinners were invited. In fact, these sacraments were supposed to ensure immortality only for the righteous. Or more agreeable conditions of immortality, we might rather say, since immortality was regarded as the ineluctable fate of the human soul. 'But let us hear,' proceeds Celsus, 'what sort of people these [Christians] invite: Whoever is a sinner, or unintelligent, or a fool, in short, whoever is possessed by an evil spirit, him will the kingdom of God receive.' No other critic of the Church was so well informed as Celsus. We can rely therefore on his testimony that early Catholicism did not obscure the essential spirit of the Gospel. In the centuries which have since elapsed, Christianity has been true to its origin and identical with itself only in so far as it has remained evangelical, that is to say, when the Gospel has not been obscured by religion or by morality. Celsus concludes: 'It must be clear to anyone, I should think, that those who are sinners by nature and training none could change, not even by punishment—to say nothing of doing it by pity.' To the Greeks it was a truism that the past cannot be changed—not even by the gods. But that is just what Jesus proposed to do. He proved by a parable (the Prodigal Son) and demonstrated by many examples that the individual, with all the past that is incorporated in him, can be effectually changed (regenerated—born again), and he held out a promise of the regeneration of the universe (Mt $19^{28}$).

It has been the fashion of late to distinguish certain of the 'higher' religions as 'religions of salvation,' and at first it seemed as if this were an instructive designation.

In fact, it is not even distinctive. The savage, from his point of view, expects salvation from his religion, though it promises him no more than security for this present life —that is to say, health of body, protection against enemies, fortune in the chase, or seasons favourable to agriculture. The notion that life may be prolonged beyond death does not necessarily express a *higher* aspiration or one so different that it requires a different name. Moreover the religions which are now commonly classed together under this denomination are not really similar, representing as they do widely contrasted notions of what salvation is and how it may be attained. Buddhism in its classical form (its only distinctive form) promised salvation *from* life and sought it by means of a peculiar dialectic. It is by means of its own peculiar dialectic that Christian Science seeks a different sort of salvation. Both are pure examples of auto-salvation. Necessarily, for the one is frankly atheistic, and the other rejects the notion of a personal God. All the cults, ancient or modern, which are founded upon belief in the immortality of the soul need no absolute saviour but only the assurance of more favourable conditions after death, which may be wrought by a limited god, by a demi-god, or even by magic. This is the attitude of Christianity wherever it has confused its distinctive hope with the doctrine of the the immortality of the soul. If salvation means a change of the past, there was no ancient religion that deserved the title of a ' religion of salvation ' before Zarathustra proposed his doctrine of apocalyptic eschatology. The religion of Israel did not deserve it until the nationalistic hope of the early prophets was transformed into a cosmic eschatology, culminating in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God, a final accord in which all discords will be resolved. This means a radical change of the past, in which, however, the individual is not annihilated. It would be superfluous to prove Jesus' interest in the individual. This parable of the physician is an instance of it, and we cannot suppose that St. Luke invented the parables he reports to illustrate the ' joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' The divine forgiveness assures the repentant sinner of the complete change of his past,

though that change will be made manifest only in the resurrection of the dead. In the meanwhile ' our life is hid with Christ in God.'

If such was the salvation Jesus promised, it is evident that no human merit could deserve it, just as no human effort can bring about the Kingdom of God, which is the indispensable condition of individual blessedness. Hence all is of grace, not of works ; and Jesus was justly impatient of the distinction fondly made between ' righteous ' persons and ' sinners.'

' I did not come to call righteous persons but sinners.' ' Call to repentance,' says Matthew, thinking to define more accurately Jesus' meaning. But, in fact, he limits it too narrowly. If the word ' call ' needs definition, it would be more apt to speak of it as a call to Eternal Life. (' Eternal life, by the way, does not mean simply immortality of the soul. No one can be said to be called to immortality of soul.) Jesus did indeed summon men to repent (Mk 1[15]) ; but that was not his distinction : the Baptist had done the same, and any preacher can do it. (It is an easy thing to call—but will they come ?) On the other hand, the call to eternal life—that is, the Gospel as applied to the individual—must be recognized as God's call, or it cannot be regarded as an effectual calling. This subtle implication of Jesus' phrase throws light upon his ' self-consciousness ' —to use an ugly word for lack of a better. It might be accounted precarious evidence, if we had not much more of the same sort. And what other sort of evidence might we expect from the mouth of a man who, because of the hopelessness of encountering faith, was resolved not to disclose clearly what he was until he sealed his fate by his confession before the high priest ? In calling men to Eternal Life Jesus placed himself decisively on the side of God, standing apart from men in order to intervene on their behalf. When St. Paul said (2 Cor. 5[19]), ' God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,' he gave voice to no hardier a thought than Jesus himself cherished.

This, said Jesus, is the purpose for which ' I *came*.' Came from whence ? It would be banal to reply that he had come from Nazareth to Capernaum. Perhaps he

meant to say that the necessity of preaching the Gospel to sinners was the reason for assuming a public rôle, that this was his divine vocation, the calling he had heard at his baptism. But perhaps (though I rejected this interpretation when commenting on Mk $1^{38}$) he meant no less than St. John intended to express by the phrase (Jn $18^{37}$), 'For this cause came I unto the world.' We ought not to count it strange if we find in Jesus' speech casual expressions which, to us who know his secret, reveal now what he had no intention then of making known.

¶ 14. Fasting.

Mk $2^{18-22}$. **At a time when the disciples of John and of the Pharisees were observing a fast day people came and asked him, 'Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast and your disciples do not fast?' [19]And Jesus said to them:**

**'Can the groomsmen fast while the bridegroom is beside them? As long as they have the bridegroom beside them they cannot fast. [20]But a day comes when the bridegroom is taken away from them—then will they fast in that day.**

**[21]'No one sews a piece of unshrunken cloth on an old cloak, otherwise the patch tears away, the new from the old, and the rent becomes worse. [22]And no one pours fresh wine into old wine-skins, otherwise the wine bursts the wine-skins, and the wine is lost and the skins too. Fresh wine must be put into new wine-skins.'**

On this occasion the critics ventured to address themselves to Jesus, but were polite enough to complain only of his disciples. It cannot, of course, be supposed that Jesus kept the fast days while his disciples ignored them. If the groomsmen do not fast at a wedding, neither does the bridegroom.

The disciples are not charged with a breach of the Mosaic law, for that required only one fast, on the Day of Atonement. It is clearly enough implied here that fasting was practised only by persons who were exceptionally devout. It was a 'tradition of the elders' which the Pharisees in particular were scrupulous to observe by

fasting (we are not told how rigorously) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This practice seemed the more meritorious because it was not prescribed by the Law. Almsgiving and prayer were like it in this respect. Together they compose the triad of meritorious practices which Jesus deals with in the Sermon on the Mount, condemning them all for the ostentatious formality of their observance, even while he implies that they can be observed with propriety (' when ye fast ' *etc.*). We are not to think that because Jesus denounced only the formalism of these practices he agreed with the Pharisees that they were meritorious. We must not be beguiled by the saying, ' Your Father who seeth in secret will reward you openly.' St. Mark's Gospel also records an extravagant promise of earthly rewards—' with persecutions ' (Mk $10^{30}$). The irony there is manifest. The notion that merit lives from man to God is rejected clearly, almost ruthlessly, by the saying (Lk $17^{10}$), ' When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded, say, We are unprofitable servants ; we have done what it was our duty to do.'

St. Luke implies that the disciples of Jesus were criticized also because they did not, like the disciples of John and of the Pharisees, ' make prayers.' (' To pray,' or ' to make prayers '—the distinction may seem a nice one, but it is of immense importance.) His account ($11^{1-4}$) of the occasion which prompted Jesus to teach his disciples how to pray, ' as John also taught his disciples,' shows that he was acquainted with an independent tradition about the disciples of John, of whom he has more to say in the Acts ($18^{25}$, $19^{3}$). It appears that John did teach his disciples to fast on certain days, as well as to repeat certain forms and observe, perhaps, certain seasons of prayer. It is clear that Jesus did none of these things. So far as fasting is concerned, the paragraph we are now studying is conclusive, and the parables Jesus here utters are directed no less against the practices John established than against the practices of the Pharisees. They are rejected as outworn and inept for the expression of the new spirit of the Gospel. And the implication of St. Luke's text seems to be materially correct ; Jesus did not teach his disciples how to ' make

prayers.' The *Paternoster* in its earliest form (St. Luke's) is not so much a prayer as a suggestion what one may pray for—if it is not rather a warning what *not* to pray for. ' A curb to our desires,' St. Augustine justly calls it. Before it could be employed, in public or in private, as a formula of prayer it had to assume the liturgical form which St. Matthew transmits to us. It is certain, at all events, that Jesus did not enjoin upon his disciples the duty either of fasting or of prayer—though he expected them to do both, and in the crisis of his last temptation he admonished his disciples to pray that they be not so terribly tested (14[38]). With respect to the *Paternoster* his phrase is, ' When ye pray.' We are left therefore in the same position as the Pharisees. Fasting and prayer are no more enjoined by the new law than by the old. They are ' traditions of the elders.' Only *we* are discouraged from regarding them as meritorious actions, or as pious practices performed for the sake of giving pleasure to God. These, however, are sincere attitudes, even if they are mistaken. It is no wonder that Jesus rebuked more sharply the *formality* of religious practices—' hypocrisy ' (*i.e.* the playing of a part), ' for a pretence,' ' to be seen of men.' Jesus' criticism is levelled not alone against the practices of the Pharisees, or the outworn customs of Israel which were incompatible with the new Gospel, but equally against the newly acquired practices of John's disciples—that is, against a characteristic tendency of religion. But not against John the Baptist himself, who fasted not on Tuesdays and Thursdays but every day (Mk 1[6]). And not against these practices as such. Jesus himself (' if you can receive it ') once fasted for forty days. He did not ' make long prayers,' but he prayed often for a long time, and with such earnestness that his disciples were amazed. And as for almsgiving, his precept was, ' Give all that you have.' The abuse of noble actions is especially hideous. ' Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.' No rule is so universally observable in the history of religions as the tendency of disciples to formalize the spirit of their masters. About the end of the first century a Christian manual of instruction (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*), which in some places

was revered as Holy Scripture, contained the injunction: 'Be not like the hypocrites who fast on Tuesdays and Thursdays; but you shall fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.' That shocks us only because it is so frankly and naïvely expressed. But have we not all been taught to regard prayer and fasting as pious practices, which are to be performed at certain times and to regard almsgiving at least as a highly meritorious performance? Why? Because, as Trader Horn would say, 'we are after all simple children of nature'—that is, we are religious. It must be evident that Jesus' doctrine is dangerous not only to morality but to religion. In this place he teaches us to fast only when we feel like it. He would as surely have us pray only when we feel like it. And as for almsgiving, St. Paul does not belie his Master when he says (2 Cor. $9^{7}$), 'God loves a cheerful giver.'

'They came and asked him.' 'They' does not necessarily refer to the scribes, nor imply that we have here the same opponents that are mentioned in the previous paragraph, who might be making a new complaint against the banquet in the house of Levi, which occurring on a Monday or a Wednesday night (as we divide our days) must have given great scandal to the righteous who were then beginning their fast. Such an assumption is hardly warranted by the loose chronology of this chapter. Nor is it needed. Such banquets seem to have been frequent. And inasmuch as Jesus and the irreligious people that were about him did not observe the fast days, they may often have given offence to their neighbours. Jesus and his disciples seem to have eaten heartily when they could. At other times, as Jesus may have grimly reflected, they went fasting because they had nothing to eat. To indicate that we do not know who these critics were I have ventured to make a free translation: '*People* came and asked him.' I reflect that there were many people besides the scribes who would be offended by Jesus' loose observance of religion and shocked by the doctrine he propounded in defence of it.

The parable with which Jesus responds to his critics is none the less a parable for the fact that it is also an allegory. As a parable it simply points out that there are occasions

when it would be unnatural and unseemly to fast, whereas it would be unnatural and unseemly not to fast when occasions arise which ' afflict the soul ' (which was the Old Testament phrase for fasting), and take away all appetite for food.

But this parable is also conceived as an allegory. Even Julicher is obliged to admit it : ' The fact that allegory seldom appears in Jesus' speech is no proof that he never used it.' The allegory shines through the parable. More clearly to us than to the disciples, who could not be expected to understand that Jesus used the word ' bridegroom ' in the Messianic sense suggested by the Old Testament. But to all his hearers it must have been clear that he described *himself* as a bridegroom and his disciples as ' the sons of the bridechamber '—that is, the gay company of wedding guests. Joyfulness, he would say, is the natural tone of such a company, and feasting its natural expression. This hint, which was not lost upon the artists of the early Church, is very necessary and precious to us. For Jesus' gaiety of spirit has been obscured by much that was austere in his teaching and by so much more that was sombre and tragic in his life and death.

There is a sombre ending even to this parable : ' But a day comes when the bridegroom is taken away from them.' Is that merely the conclusion of the parable ? or is that, too, allegorical ? Is it merely an analogy to prove that there may be natural and proper occasions for fasting ? or is it a first and obscure prophecy of the Passion ? The final phrase, ' then will they fast *in that day*,' seems as if it were formulated by the Evangelist to justify the subsequent practice of the Church, particularly the fast before Easter and on Fridays. Only, that sort of thing is not in St. Mark's manner. And, on the other hand, we have no reason to doubt that Jesus, from the very beginning of his public ministry, contemplated the necessity of martyrdom. Moreover (if we may trust the Synoptic Gospels), it is very much in Jesus' manner to think aloud and say things about himself which he expected no one to understand. For example, no one understood all that he meant by ' the Bridegroom.'

The two parables which next engage our attention form

a perfect pair, designed both of them to illustrate the general principle that new and old do not go together and may both of them suffer from being incongruously mated. This is not the same point that was made by the previous parable of the wedding party, but it is an answer to the same criticism. This answer is broader than the other and more radical. It applies not only to fasting, but to ancient religious custom in general. Wellhausen says in this connection that Jesus' word was more radical than his conduct. In fact, Jesus observed, though without meticulous scruple, the ancient religious customs of his people; and he did *not* (as this saying might prompt us to expect) dictate to his disciples the new forms of worship and organization which would aptly express the new spirit of the Gospel. He left it to this spirit to clothe itself in the course of time with its appropriate form. And this expectation was so promptly and so abundantly realized that it has seemed to many as if Jesus himself must have prescribed the customs which universally characterized the early Church. If there is any merit at all in my work on *The Church and its Organization*, or in the passages concerning organization and worship in my *Problems of Church Unity*, it is to be found in the perception that the institutions which grew up in the Church were substantially original and strikingly conformed to the new spirit of the Gospel. That may be said without ignoring the influence inevitably exerted by the Synagogue on the one hand and by the Gentile environment on the other. This was true of the Jewish as well as of the Gentile sections of the Church. For these two sections were not separated by any profound differences with regard to Church customs, but only by the fact that the one did and the other did not observe also the customs of the Synagogue. In the main, disciples from among the Gentiles could not be induced to accept customs of the Old Law which had no relevancy to the Gospel. The theoretical justification of that break with the Jewish past was St. Paul's accomplishment. His task was the more difficult because there was no explicit word of Jesus to which he could make appeal in support of his contention. It may seem as if he might have appealed to this pair of parables. But we must recognize that, though the

intention of these parables is clear enough to *us*, the point they made was not so plain that embittered adversaries must accept it. For the same reason we cannot suppose that St. Mark, as a Pauline disciple, invented these parables to justify the Gentile-Christian position. For such a purpose he would need to make his point much clearer.

To Jesus' hearers, however, and as applied to the particular point at issue, these parables must have been abundantly clear. If they are obscure to us, it is only because they refer to customs which to us are unfamiliar. We are not accustomed to pouring wine into wine-skins and observing how this sort of 'bottle' deteriorates with time. Very few of us in our opulent day wear our woollen cloaks till they are threadbare and weak with age, and so we have no opportunity to observe the disastrous effect of patching a hole with a strong new piece of cloth. With some exaggeration the parable speaks of the patch as so 'new' that it has not yet received the treatment of the fuller, which weakens the texture of the wool while it bleaches it and cleanses it of fat. (I am perhaps the only man in the Western world that wears his great-grandfather's overcoat.) But both of these parables must have been clear to Jesus' poor and frugal hearers. They may have perceived, too, more promptly than we, how well this pair combines with the parable of the wedding feast. The first parable asserts the incongruity between joy and every show of sadness. 'The marriage hearse' is Blake's cruel expression for it. This pair of parables illustrates the incongruity between new and old. These are distinct propositions, but not heterogeneous. They are in fact combined in the familiar line,

> Crabbed age and youth cannot live together.

¶ 15. The Sabbath made for Man.

Mk 2[23–28]. **It happened that he was passing through the wheat fields on the Sabbath, and his disciples began to pluck the ears of wheat as they went. [24]And the Pharisees said to him, 'Look! Why are they doing on the Sabbath what is not allowed?' [25]And he said to them, 'Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and his men? [26]He went into the house of God when**

**Abiathar was high priest and ate the Presentation Loaves which only the priests are allowed to eat, and he also gave them to his men.' [27]And he said to them,**

***'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath;***
***[28]so that man is master even of the Sabbath.'***

The situation grows worse. With every new dispute Jesus' relations with the Pharisees become more strained. Controversy ripens into conflict. And Jesus makes no effort to placate his adversaries. On the contrary, he answers them roundly, asserting principles more radical than his deeds implied. In the next paragraph, which deals again with the Sabbath question, he publicly challenges the Pharisees, and they respond with a plot to destroy him. The last attack of the series is the most bitter: 'He has Beelzebul.' It is evident that we could not invert the order of this series without producing an anti-climax which would not be possible in actual fact. For if the disputes mentioned last in this narrative had actually occurred at the beginning, there would have been no place for the others. Questions about the observance of fast days would have followed lamely after a breach of the Sabbath law. We have already remarked that the arrangement here is topical. That is to say, we are not to suppose that the vexatious events narrated in the second and third chapters of the Gospel followed one another in close succession. Between the conflict we are now about to study and the other which immediately follows it there must have been an interval of at least one week, for both occur upon the Sabbath. In the period which comprises all these conflicts many things may have happened of a different and a happier sort. Perhaps some of the incidents which St. Mark recounts later occurred actually between one and another of these conflicts. The visit to Nazareth ($6^{1-6}$), for instance, could not have occurred *after* his relatives had come from Nazareth to take him into custody as a madman ($3^{21, 31-35}$). Yet even this section is chronological, in the sense that the events it deals with actually occurred in the order in which they are related.

In the dispute which now claims our attention Jesus is

again addressed directly, but he is blamed only by implication for a fault of his disciples. We must suppose that Jesus himself did not pluck the ears of wheat, yet he could justly be held responsible for what he allowed his disciples to do. Especially when the offence was so flagrant —not a mere mark of disregard for 'the traditions of the elders,' as in the instances heretofore related, but a wilful transgression of the laws of God.

We do not easily understand the gravity of the charge that was brought against the disciples. To us their act would seem more reprehensible if it were regarded as theft. Half a dozen men trampling down the grain and eating enough to appease their hunger presents a case of wanton destruction and illicit appropriation of other men's property. Crime against property is a thing we so sincerely deplore on principle that our reprobation of it is commonly out of all proportion to the magnitude of the offence. A pickpocket is as bad as a bank robber. So the Jews felt about transgressions of the ritual law. In this field the lightest transgression was tremendous, for it was an offence against God. Perhaps we are not altogether justified in scorning the Jew for counting his duty towards God a weightier matter than duty towards his neighbour. Jesus himself was capable of insisting upon the importance of the minutiae of the ritual law (Mt $5^{19}$), and a Christian Jew (Jas. $2^{10}$) asserts that 'if a man offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' From the legal point of view that proposition is true—not for the divine law only, but for law in general. One who transgresses the law is a lawbreaker, whatever be the magnitude of his offence; and if he transgresses wittingly, he displays his contempt for the law.

In this case there was really no question of any offence against a neighbour. No trampling of the grain, for the disciples were doubtless walking in a footpath. Neither any theft, for the beneficent law permitting the poor to glean the fields was stretched to cover the case of hungry men plucking the ears of wheat as they walked past the 'corner of a field' (Deut. $23^{25}$). There was therefore no offence except a breach of the law which prohibited labour on the Sabbath. Of course there was no real labour involved

in plucking ears of wheat. That was no more laborious than picking up food from the table. But technically it was reaping. And the implied preparation of these ears for eating ('rubbing them in their hands,' as St. Luke expressly says, 6[1]) involved the operations of threshing and winnowing. This was clearly a breach of the law, which Jesus did not attempt to deny or to extenuate. No ordinary parable could be applied to so grave a case, and the parallel which Jesus cites from the Old Testament had to do with so serious a matter as a sacrilege committed by David (1 Sam. 21[1–16]). The opponents of Jesus would readily agree that David, a sacred hero, must be held guiltless even though he trangressed the letter of the law. It was not so easy to admit that he was justified in sharing this holy bread with his licentious companions. Yet that was implied by the fact that the Scripture expresses no condemnation, and that the high priest (who, by the way, was Ahimelech, not Abiathar) consented to give the loaves for this profane use. The companions of David are expressly mentioned because they correspond to the disciples of Jesus. The precedent perfectly corresponded to the case in question.

Jesus also emphasizes the fact that David and his men 'were in need and hungry.' That was their excuse. And that was excuse enough for the disciples. It is implied by St. Mark that the disciples plucked the ears of wheat in order to eat them, as Matthew (12[1]) and Luke (6[1]) say expressly. This is one of the rare passages where the other Synoptists are more circumstantial than St. Mark; but evidently they do nothing more than express his implications. 'In need and hungry'—that circumstance was essential for Jesus. 'Doing good to people,' 'saving life,' are the expressions he uses in the next following paragraph. That is the point: regard for human welfare, even mere bodily welfare, takes precedence of ritual law. All this and more too is expressed by the saying:

'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.' The Sabbath law is the only ritual prescription contained in the Ten Commandments. The Pharisees regarded the Sabbath rest as a tribute owed to God—so also did the Puritans, and so do we. Consequently, the more

onerous it is made to man, the more pleasing it must be to God. Veblen does not too grossly travesty this notion by describing it, in his clever jargon, as an example of 'conspicuous waste' or 'vicarious leisure' performed in honour of the deity. If even this law has to yield to considerations of human welfare, so must every ritual precept whatsoever. That is the force of the phrase, '*even* of the Sabbath.'

Many ritual laws have an obvious reference to human welfare. This is peculiarly true of the Sabbath rest. We have strangely enough preferred to learn the Ten Commandments out of the Book of Exodus ($20^{12-16}$), where the obligation of the Sabbath is justified by the theological consideration that God himself rested on the seventh day. But Deuteronomy ($5^{16-20}$) alleges only a sociological justification for the weekly day of rest, regarding it as a beneficent provision for the relief of dependent labourers, and enforcing it by the reminder, 'For thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt.' If this was not the earliest purpose of the Sabbath, it was at least the prophetic conception. The Puritan was not so much at fault because he confounded the Sabbath with the Lord's Day as because he ignored both the prophetic conception of the Sabbath rest and Jesus' larger principle that 'the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.' We must confess that Jesus was more religious than the great prophets of Israel (Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah), yet he was as much of a moralist as they.

The second proposition which Jesus enunciates is more radical than the first. From the conception that 'the Sabbath was made for man,' it draws the consequence 'that man is master even of the Sabbath.' That 'son of man' may mean *man* simply, I have argued in connection with verse 10 of this same chapter. The case is still plainer here. For not only must the hearers have understood the word in this sense, but the parallelism of the clauses determines its meaning. From the proposition that the Sabbath was made for man, one can properly deduce man's mastery over the Sabbath. The Messiah's supremacy was not to be proved in this way. Indeed, it did not need to be proved, and no one would think of saying of the Messiah

that he was master ' *even* ' of the Sabbath. I conclude that in this case at least St. Mark was aware that the phrase ' son of man ' was not used here in a Messianic sense. By what he adds to Mark's narrative Matthew makes it clear that he regarded Jesus' statement as a Messianic claim (' Behold ! A greater than the Temple . . . a greater than Solomon is here '). But so also did Luke ; and both prove it by what they omit. They omit the word ' even,' which obviously was not appropriate if the Messiah's authority was in question ; and they omit the phrase ' so that,' because the Messiah's supremacy is not obviously deduced from the previous clause ; therefore that clause also is omitted as superfluous, and all we have left is the affirmation that ' the Son of Man (Messiah) is master of the Sabbath.' That afforded no answer at all to the criticism of the Pharisees.

The meaning of Jesus in this place is so clear that we have no reason for mistaking it, except our incredulity in the face of such thoroughgoing liberalism. Matthew and Luke were taken aback by such radical sayings as ' Man has power to forgive sins on earth,' and ' Man is master even of the Sabbath.' The latter saying would have served St. Paul well in his controversy with the Pharisees, and we may wonder that he made no use of it. It cannot be said that the tradition did not exist in his day, for there came no one after Jesus who could have invented such a saying. We do not know if Jesus himself made the broad deductions which his principle warranted. We have already had occasion to remark that he was more radical in his words than in his deeds. He himself seems to have kept the Sabbath except when he was moved to relieve human misery. He did make a practical deduction in the direction of Pauline liberalism, if we may trust an extra-canonical tradition which Codex D inserts in St Luke's text in place of the saying about the Son of Man : ' On the same day, seeing a man working on the Sabbath, he said to him, Man, if you understand what you are doing, you are blessed ; but if not, you are accursed and a transgressor of the law.'

Incidentally, we find in this passage an indication of the time of year. The wheat was ripe : that is to say, it was

about the harvest season, some time between Passover and Pentecost. This indication is precious because it is one of the few hints at chronology which this Gospel gives us. The Baptist's great revival could not have occurred before spring, since it involved the immersion of converts in the river Jordan. Not long after that (the 'forty days in the wilderness' is our only hint) John was thrown into prison and Jesus stood forth to proclaim the Gospel. After that again it was not long until the harvest; and that season seems to have marked the height of Jesus' popularity in Galilee, as well as the climax of the opposition. The parables which compare the Kingdom to growing plants (chapter 4) were appropriate to that season, when the miracle of the field was visibly complete. The various vicissitudes of seed-sowing were known to all, but could not at all seasons be pointed out. Besides, even the parable of the sower (apart from its allegorical interpretation) does not so much emphasize the loss of many seeds as the marvellous increase of that part which fell upon good ground—'and brought forth thirtyfold, sixtyfold, even a hundredfold!' Still more clear is the parable of the seed which grows of itself ($4^{26-29}$). If that was a visible parable of the imminence of the Kingdom, the grain must have been ripe in the ear, ready for the 'sickle,' symbol of the harvest—the Last Judgment. At that time too the mustard ($4^{30-32}$) had become 'greater than all herbs.' And the golden broom was still in blossom, arrayed more gorgeously than Solomon in all his glory (Mt $6^{28-30}$)—before it was turned into charcoal for the baker's oven. (That is what broom and genestra are still used for. And I know no other flower which might be called 'grass' and is commonly 'cast into the oven.') We must suppose that the labour of the harvest was past before Jesus attempted to leave Galilee and the immense multitudes were free to gather from all quarters and intercept him ($6^{30-44}$, $48^{1-10}$). After that we have *no* indication at all of times and seasons until the following spring when Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Passover. We have to suppose that he passed the rest of the summer and the whole of the following winter in pagan territory, alone with his disciples. About this period, far longer than the stay

in Galilee, St. Mark tells us nothing, except an incident that occurred in 'the territory of Tyre and Sidon' ($7^{24-30}$), and the 'confession of Peter,' in the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi ($8^{27-33}$), which was preliminary to the last journey. Though the Transfiguration is recounted later, in the text as we now have it, it evidently occurred near the lake of Galilee, on the 'mountain' where he had spent a night in prayer. In the account of the days at Jerusalem the fig tree which had leaves but no fruit, 'because it was not the season of figs' ($11^{12-14}$), and the other 'parable of the fig tree' ($13^{28}$) are clear indications of the time of year; but they are superfluous indications when we know that the Passover was at hand.

¶ 16. Lawful to do Good.

Mk $3^{1-6}$. **And he went again into the synagogue, and there was a man there with a withered hand, [2] and they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might have a ground for accusing him. [3] And he said to the man with the withered hand, 'Come forward.' [4] Then he said to them, 'Is it allowable to do good to people on the Sabbath, or to do them harm? to save life, or to kill?' But they remained silent. [5] And looking around on them angrily, because he was hurt by their hardness of heart, he said to the man, 'Hold out your hand.' And he held it out, and his hand was healed. [6] On this the Pharisees left the synagogue and immediately joined the Herodians in a conspiracy to destroy him.**

This is not a duplication of the foregoing controversy about the Sabbath. It is clearly a consequence of it. His opponents (in verse 6 it appears that 'they' were 'the Pharisees') were 'watching him closely' to see if he would practise the radical principle he had lately announced. And Jesus accepted their implied challenge. Truculently, as they must have felt. For if he must heal people on the Sabbath, he might at least do it quietly, in some private place, instead of making a scandal in the synagogue. Moreover, a man with a withered hand was not an emergency case. He might have been cured on any other day of the

week, as the scribes once suggested (Lk $13^{14}$). But Jesus was not conciliatory, and his opponents did not expect him to be. They noticed this man with the withered hand, they knew that Jesus could cure him, and they had little doubt that he would do it, then and there. And Jesus did it, challengingly. He called upon the man to step out into the 'middle' of the room, in front of all these watchful eyes; and with that touching parable before them he in turn challenged his enemies with a dilemma which required them either to renounce their legalistic principles or to admit that the law might be bad. No wonder that they 'remained silent.' But their silence in such a case Jesus regarded as evident proof of their 'hardness of heart'—perhaps of a 'hardening of the heart,' as a sign of God's definitive judgment upon them (Isa. $6^{9, 10}$; Rom. $11^{25}$; Jn $12^{40}$). Because he was deeply moved by this he looked around upon them in anger as he ordered the man to hold out his hand. Merely by holding it out it was healed. No more *work* was done than just that. But that was technically a work of healing —the Sabbath was profaned, and Jesus was guilty of transgressing the law of God, sinning presumptuously, or 'with a high hand,' as the Old Testament graphically expresses it. For the first time his adversaries had a case against him which might be considered by a Jewish court. Sacred history told of a man who was stoned to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath.

We may wonder that Jesus was not prosecuted for his radical *opinions*. It is not easy for us to get the Jewish point of view, because the Church, from the beginning, has been strongly intolerant of false opinions but indulgent towards the faults of human weakness. The Jews, on the contrary, showed broad toleration with respect to opinions but no indulgence for breaches of the law. They had no prosecutions for heresy, for they had no dogma except the unity of God. Contrasting opinions produced 'sects' within the unity of Judaism. Hence Jesus could not be convicted for his opinions, but only for the perpetration of a crime. They had caught him now in the very act, with all the synagogue as witnesses. But in point of fact nothing could be done to his damage in an ecclesiastical court while

all the people were acclaiming him. The civil authority dependent upon Rome, which had recently cast John into prison, seemed to the Pharisees to promise a better success. So because they could accomplish nothing in the synagogue which had been so grossly profaned, they left it ; and outside they made up to the Herodians—who probably were not churchgoers. Their name indicates that they were a party inclined to live on good terms with the rulers Rome had set over them and had therefore some influence with the government. In Galilee they were pretty much what the Sadducees were in Jerusalem. Both these parties must have opposed the nationalistic enthusiasms fostered by the Pharisees. Yet with either enemy the Pharisees were willing to unite for the sake of destroying a man who shared many of their convictions. Their most cherished convictions, we might think ; for what they had in common was nothing less than the expectation of the Kingdom of God and hope in the resurrection of the dead. The event proves that legalism was more precious to them than their eschatology. Or did they take no pleasure in a Kingdom of God which was not first of all the realization of their nationalistic revenge ?

This plain text, which I have merely repeated in different words, needs no further interpretation. But the question which Jesus put to the Pharisees challenges *us* too. St. Luke recounts another story ($13^{10-17}$) which is similar to this, except for the question : ' Does not each one of you loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to watering ? ' That was an apt question, but not so deep and difficult. Matthew ($12^{11}$) has one like it : ' Is there a man of you with one sheep who will not catch hold of it and lift it out of a pit on the Sabbath, if it falls in ? ' Strangely enough, St. Matthew thinks this good enough to use in place of the saying which St. Mark records. It is really not appropriate in that connection, for, as we have remarked, the case of the withered hand was not urgent. But perhaps St. Matthew thought it a safer saying. And I do not wonder. For we too have prejudices which make us slow to welcome the principle which Jesus asserted by his sharp dilemma. If he had merely proposed the choice of doing *good* or doing

*evil*, there would be no dilemma for us—only the familiar alternative. Neither would there have been any perplexity for St. Matthew, or any slightest difficulty for the Pharisees. The only trouble is that this alternative has no pertinence to Jesus' proposed transgression of the Sabbath law. If the good is defined as conformity to the moral law, there could be no sense in asking whether it is morally lawful to do good. But Jesus speaks of doing good *to somebody*—which conceivably might not be required by the moral law, or might (as in the present case) seem even to be forbidden by it. This is the proper meaning of the word, and this sense is also determined by the second member of the clause, 'to do harm'—as well as by the dreadful antithesis of the second clause: 'to save life, or to kill.' So we have a dilemma which is frightful not only to the Pharisees but to us. For if we acknowledge that 'to do good to people' is an obligation superior to our moral law, we condemn that law as inferior. In any case, the moral law stands condemned as imperfect, if in a single case it conflicts with the duty of doing a deed which we feel to be good in itself. When we talk of 'Christian ethics' we commonly mean a traditional code of morals which, like all other codes of the sort, is a residual deposit of ancient custom—much of it antiquated. So regarded, it still remains a practical authority; but it cannot properly be accounted an absolute authority, and it would be foolish to treat it as irreformable. Every generation, wisely or unwisely, will revolt against the old code as a code, and ought to seek to reform it in accordance with some rational principle wherever it is seen to conflict with the duty of doing good. Jesus' clear implication is that the duty of doing good to people takes precedence of all other moral precepts. He conceives that the essential meaning of the law is expressed by the injunction, 'Whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them' (Mt $7^{12}$). But by this he seems to set at naught the philosophical theories of ethics which pretend to be the foundation of Christian morals. He strengthens the hands of the enemy. Jesus' ethics, we learn here, was utilitarian—in a sense. The Good he counted equivalent to the Right. It was eudaemonistic—in a sense.

How could it have been otherwise when he was so lavish in his promises of happiness? It was even hedonistic—in a sense we shall presently perceive. Not teaching us to snatch at the nearest pleasure, to be sure. The Beatitudes make that clear: 'Happy are ye poor . . . ye that hunger now . . . ye that mourn now' (Lk 6[20, 21]). His ethical principles have regard to life as a whole and in its highest attainments and in its farthest reaches . . . 'for great is your reward in heaven.' Shrewdly comparing all values, like 'wise moneychangers,' we are taught to choose the best. For the sake of attaining the best ('a pearl of great price') it may be profitable to forgo much that is merely good. Jesus who made such a scandal for the sake of healing a withered right hand was capable of admonishing his disciples that it might be necessary to sacrifice even this good thing for the sake of gaining the best (Mt 5[30]). 'The best is none too good for me'—that is substantially the maxim recommended to Jesus' disciples. *Herrenmoral!* Shade of Nietzsche! But repeat this maxim fifty times a day, in conditions favourable to self-suggestion, and infallibly you must become a Christian.

This superlative, the Best, seems just the thing to set absolute ethics on its feet again. But our gain is only theoretical, if we have learned to doubt whether 'mother knows best,' whether our traditional code of morals is infallible, and to distrust even our own sufficiency to distinguish the best from the good—to say nothing of the difficulty of descrying a way to attain it. So we are compelled to be moral agnostics. No bad thing either. For the more sceptical we are about *systems* of morality or ethics, the more we shall be inclined to look to Jesus as our authority for what is best for us and for all. He warns us (Mt 23[8–10]) not to presume that we ourselves (even if we were apostles) are trustworthy teachers of morals, and not to look for infallible teaching anywhere on earth, but to remember that *one* is our teacher, the Christ. That is what it means to be a 'disciple.' It was the fashion not long ago for those who rejected the Christian dogma to boast that they accepted the *moral* teaching of Jesus. They did not mean it really. And now very few are absurd enough to

make such an assertion. And we who profess to be ' disciples,' do *we* mean it ? Have we even taken the pains to discover what Jesus' moral teaching is ? Have we any inkling how peculiar it is ? how incommensurate with any of the named varieties of ethical theory ? I have said that Jesus' theory was hedonistic in a sense . . . because it requires us to give pleasure to *others*. It is eudaemonistic only in the sense that it aims after happiness for *others*. Utilitarian—not in the sense of seeking ' the greatest good of the greatest number ' (which is a result far beyond our calculation), but in the practical sense of doing some good to somebody. We come nearer the truth when we confess that Jesus had no ethical theory and propounded no moral system. Neither did he, as the very early Church liked to think, enunciate a ' New Law.' That is the notion which still prevails in all the Orthodox Churches, and it explains Tolstoi's intolerable legalism. But Jesus, who gave example to his disciples of so free a dealing with the Old Law, surely did not mean to subject them more rigidly to another. Jesus was a casuist, says Havelock Ellis. And that is almost true. He did judge each case for itself. But in the proper sense of the word he was not a casuist, for the reason that he felt so independent of the letter of the law that he did not need to force upon it an artificial interpretation. ' It was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you.' That is not ' living casuistry in place of a dead and rigid code ' : it is simply the assertion that it is always ' lawful to do good.'

To do good . . . *to others*. That is the onesidedness of Jesus' teaching. For that reason we cannot compare it with any system of metaphysical or absolute ethics. I like Albert Schweitzer's formulation of the ethical principle as ' reverence for life.' He can justly boast that this includes the egoistic as well as the altruistic interest. But precisely for this reason it is not an apt formulation of Christian ethics. Jesus does not treat these two interests as though they were equivalent or belonged even to the same sphere. Only one of them, as Jesus appears to think, belongs to the sphere of morals ; the other belongs rather to religion. The egoistic interest Jesus satisfies with a *promise*, while

reverence for the life of others is imposed as a *duty*, and as the only duty. The attainment of this *promise* cannot be regarded as a moral duty, for it is the promise of a *gift*, the Kingdom of God. We are told indeed to 'seek' this *summum bonum*, but it is manifestly of such a sort (so far beyond our desert not only, but beyond the utmost reach of our attainment), that it cannot be gained even by the strongest, but by all must be '*received*,' even as a helpless child receives the things necessary for its life (Mk 10[15]). It is spoken of as a 'reward,' but Jesus takes pains to explain that it is a grace bestowed as bountifully upon 'this last' who has toiled but one hour as upon those who have borne the burden and heat of the day (Mt 20[1–16]).

Morality is greatly simplified when all the problems of self-interest are excluded. That removes the only serious conflict of interests. For the only direction in which we are prone to excess is in 'reverence' for our own life—the effort to procure for ourselves pleasure and happiness. In this direction we may not be content with the measure Jesus imposes ('food and clothing'). Self-interest may still accompany all our actions and vitiate them all. But we are at all events delivered from the worst hypocrisy, the glorification of our selfishness, when we have learned *not* to consider self-realization as a *duty*.

But by thus simplifying the problem of morality we create a paradox. Jesus himself stated it in the sharpest terms: 'He that would save his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life shall save it.' Positively he expressed this paradox in the ideal of *meekness* (Mt 11[29]). That does not mean entertaining a low opinion of ourselves, for it is a quality we are to learn from the example of Jesus. 'Yoke and burden' are the symbols which define it—as St. Paul also defines it in Phil. 2[3–10]. It means assuming *heartily* the attitude of a servant. That is *Sclavenmoral*! Precisely. And it is enslavement chiefly to our inferiors (if it were pertinent to make such distinctions). That is the worst of it. . . . Or is it the best? It is like a mother's service to her child. Such service is not degrading, because it is willingly assumed. There is a pride in this humility which makes it impossible for one to feel offended at any affront

our inferior masters may offer us. That is the only point of view from which we can understand Jesus' injunction to love our enemies. It is not natural for a mother to avenge herself upon a child that offends her. But this pride is itself a paradox. Proud slaves! None can feel this paradox more keenly than we who have a promise of such blessedness 'as eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to believe.' With such a promise held before us, how shall we not be self-assertive and seek after self-realization? (Mt $16^{26}$). The answer is that *God* will attend to that. We are left free to practise self-abnegation, with the assurance that we shall suffer no loss by the neglect of self-interest. It appears then that the salvation *of* ourselves begins with salvation *from* ourselves. This is the deliverance we experience 'when we discover in Jesus the spirit who alone was fit to rule yet assumes the character of service as his distinctive mark in the world. When his might over us creates the willingness to serve and the power to serve, we have attained a position which we could never reach by our own resolution or by anxious concern about ourselves and all that we can discover within ourselves' (W. Herrmann).

So the way is left free for altruistic conduct—which is the conduct Jesus' moral precepts have chiefly in view. And if this whole disquisition about ethics has seemed very complicated, the aim of it is merely to show how exceedingly Jesus has simplified the problem of morality. All metaphysical ethics is up in the air, and all codes of morality must be interpreted with casuistry; but the practical principle that it is always 'lawful to do good' to people makes everything plain. Duty cannot seem a complicated matter if it is only a choice between doing good to people and doing them harm, between saving life and killing. That is not the same thing as 'doing people good'—which is a less obvious duty because it is not so clear a possibility. And we are not required to discern what is better or best for people. That would be too difficult. We have only to do them good. Jesus went about 'doing good'—that is, healing men's bodies (which is not the conceivably best)—and to his disciples he mentions 'a cup of cool water' as

the merest example of what is good. The thing is as simple as that! It appeared to Jesus that every one must be able to discover opportunities for doing good to people, and that the only real difficulty about the moral act is our selfish indisposition to do it—that is, our 'hardness of heart.'

Ethics so simplified is degraded, some will think. A chorus of reprobation greeted the term by which Schweitzer sought to describe Jesus' ethics. '*Interimsethik*'—it means that Jesus' ethical teaching was not absolute but relative; not intended to apply to all worlds and to all time, but precisely to the conditions obtaining now in this world of ours, in view of the judgment that is to come and the glory that will afterwards be revealed. I cannot get it through my stupid head why this notion should be thought offensive. This much at least must be clear, I should think, that a great part of the moral law—all that has to do with sex relationships—is applicable only to this *interim* in which we now live, and can have no appropriateness to the Kingdom of God in which we shall be 'like the angels' (Mk 12[25]). But also all of Jesus' sayings about service are inapplicable *there*. *Here* we serve—there we shall *reign*. But this is to say that the most distinctive moral teachings of Jesus, his requisition of *heroic* conduct, all the sayings which then were accounted 'hard' and so seem to us now, are *conditional* upon the hope of the coming Kingdom. That it is 'lawful to do good' may seem a universal maxim; but that we should be continually doing it, to the point of sacrificing our own interests and pleasures, cannot be made to seem reasonable except as *interimsethik*, in view of the Kingdom of God. And that means not only 'the recompense of reward,' the joy that is set before us, but also and especially the Judgment. The moral conduct required of us here and now is penance (practical *metanoia*) in view of the Judgment to come. No thought more fit than that to prompt us to the last extravagances of heroism (Mt 5[29, 30], 16[24–27]). If we were not sinners in the sight of God, a blameless tenor of life might suffice to 'assure our heart before him.' . . . But perhaps not. Conscious of God's immeasurable 'distance,' and mindful of our 'debts,' we might well say, 'We are unprofitable servants,' when we

have done all that it was our duty to do. Beyond that, to such reckless behaviour as Jesus expects of us, to heroic self-abnegation, we should hardly proceed if we had only his command and not also his promise. No use trying to deny it—Jesus' moral precepts are absurd without eschatology. The notion that the Kingdom of God has already come, or is 'within you,' will never prompt to conduct like that. Conversely, it is manifestly true, as St. Paul keenly felt, that they who live according to the Christian rule are 'of all men most pitiable,' . . . if there be no resurrection of the dead.

Here, taking my cue from the first suggestion that presents itself in the Gospel, I have set down once for all what I am now able to say about Jesus' moral teaching. It is certain that his immediate disciples did not venture to draw far-reaching inferences from the bold maxims which Jesus proclaimed. When St. Paul did *that* the original Apostles were scandalized. Even those Evangelists who were Paul's disciples give hardly a hint in their Gospels that they understood the broad consequences of Jesus' words. Paul's dictum was manifestly dangerous. The shout of an anarchist, threatening the foundations of morality: '*Not under law*, but under grace!' What will become of society? Such a man must be ready to say (and so it was falsely reported of him), 'Let us do evil, if only we can accomplish some good by it' (Rom. $3^8$). When this same doctrine was revived again at the Reformation, in the trenchant phrases of Luther, Catholics sincerely denounced it as immoral. But Jesus himself was the first great immoralist. The dictum that in spite of all laws it is 'lawful to do good' is a sharp thrust at conventional morality. Morality, however, is of too tough a fibre to be disabled permanently by the Gospel. It would be hard to say whether the Gospel is more obscured to-day by morality or by religion. It is not easy for us now to admit that Jesus expected conduct to be regulated by *tact* rather than by the cautious and pedantic application of rules. Or that he gives countenance to those dangerous people who assert that conduct is an *art*, and that morals therefore is a branch

of aesthetics. The ideal of 'doing good' is, of course, utilitarian. It is clear that Jesus expected his disciples to do 'good works' (Acts 9[36]), but it is significant that he thought this sort of thing had better be hidden (Mt 6[1–4]). On the other hand, we may observe that the only sort of conduct he enthusiastically commended was what he called 'a beautiful deed' (*kalon ergon*). That kind of beauty he prized far above utility (Mk 14[3–7]), and (if we may trust St. Matthew's version of a great saying) he would by no means have it hidden (Mt 5[16]).

In spite of his many and sharp controversies about Sabbath observance, Jesus himself kept the Sabbath. That was a part of the humility of the Incarnation. And his earliest disciples were never completely liberated from the burden of this law. They not only kept the Sabbath (as, being Jews, they properly might do), but they looked askance at the Gentile Christians who could not be brought to understand the advantage to God of this 'conspicuous waste' performed on his behalf—'the waste of one-seventh of a man's life,' as Seneca said of it. In the end Jesus himself, the great champion of the liberty to do good, fell a victim to the strict Sabbath law. Tragic irony! Because the sun was setting and the holy day about to begin, his enemies pierced his side to make sure that he was dead, and his friends buried him with indecent haste, in a stranger's tomb, without the customary anointing, and without a prayer. Even the faithful women did not venture to come with their spices till 'the Sabbath was past.' Then it was too late: it was already the Lord's Day. *That* day was henceforth kept as a day of gladness by all who were Christians, whether from among the Jews or from among the Gentiles, by those who kept the Sabbath and by those who ignored it. After some centuries it was possible to celebrate it as a beneficent day of rest, like the old Sabbath in its original institution, but with no precept of obligation except the custom of remembering the Lord in the eloquent sacrament of his Body and Blood. By maintaining that 'dominical precept' the Roman Church shows itself more evangelical than the 'Evangelicals' who prefer to remember Moses and his Law.

¶ 17. Amazing Success.

Mk 3$^{7-12}$. **So Jesus retired with his disciples to the sea, and a great many people from Galilee followed him—and also from Judaea, 8 Jerusalem, Idumaea, the other side of the Jordan, and the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon a great many people came to him because they heard of his deeds. 9And he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, as an escape from the crowd which threatened to crush him; 10 for he healed so many that all who had any ailments pressed against him to touch him. 11And whenever the impure spirits saw him they fell down before him, screaming, 'You are the Son of God.' 12And he warned them often and sternly not to make him known.**

Acute critics are able to discern here the hand of an 'editor,' where I can perceive only a return to the impressionist manner of 1$^{32-34}$. It is plain, of course, that this paragraph interrupts the sequence of controversies and conflicts. Yet not with a discordant note, for the Evangelist evidently regards the controversies as so many instances of Jesus' success. Now it is shown that, in spite of the increasing bitterness of his enemies, Jesus' popularity grows enormously, and he is encouraged (as the next paragraph recounts) to establish his movement on a national basis by the appointment of the Twelve. This digression might have been designed for its artistic effect, as a foil for so much controversy. But it is also a useful digression. A necessary one, in fact. For how else could we be prepared for the increase of the multitude that thronged to Jesus (3$^{20}$), for the sudden appearance of 'scribes *from Jerusalem*,' for their ruthless charge that he was in league with Satan, and for the suspicion of his own family that he was out of his mind? It seems to me that what is told in these two paragraphs needed to be told in this place and must have happened at this time, to account for the bitter attack which brought Jesus' stay in Capernaum to an end.

And what is told here seems to be a pragmatic consequence of what went before. Therefore I have translated, '*So* Jesus retired.' The Greek word is 'and'; but in

New Testament Greek the word *and* is used monotonously with a variety of meanings. To translate it here by 'so' is an interpretation, but an interpretation which is required by the word 'retired.' 'Jesus retired with his disciples to the sea' because of his last conflict with the scribes and their plot to destroy him. That made Capernaum an uncomfortable town to teach in, though he seems to have returned there sometimes to pass the night. In particular, Jesus seems to have come to the conclusion that the synagogue was no place for him. It was in fact the institution of the Pharisaical scribes, and they might justly resent Jesus' intrusion into their stronghold. Henceforth Jesus taught in the open air, on the seashore or on the mountain side. If the visit to Nazareth (for the reasons given on page 228) must be put before this time, it may be said that we have no subsequent mention of the synagogue as the field of Jesus' activity. It may be that he never attended its meetings again—ceasing, as it were, to be a churchgoer. In Jerusalem he taught in the Temple. And after the Resurrection *that* is where the disciples gathered for worship, and they seem to have had then no ties with the synagogue which had to be broken off. It was Saul, a real synagogue Jew, who first used the synagogues of the diaspora for Christian propaganda. St. John's Gospel ($9^{22}$) implies that Jesus and his disciples were excommunicated by the synagogue. It is more likely that they themselves ignored it after this moment. But we must remember that after this moment they did not remain long in Galilee, that in the pagan lands where they passed so long a time there were no synagogues, and that they were not likely to interest themselves about synagogues in Jerusalem at the season of Passover.

This paragraph seems to me a good example of impressionistic art. I suppose that it means to give a composite picture of what went on by the lake during a succession of days. It clearly enough gives the impression that the movement initiated by Jesus had by this time outgrown the synagogue, and that all out of doors was not too big for it, when not only Galileans thronged to him, but people from the remotest parts of Palestine, to which his fame had spread.

And with this increase in numbers and enthusiasm there went naturally a multiplication of the cures.

About the character of Jesus' cures enough has already been said in connection with earlier episodes. No one nowadays will doubt the truth of the report that Jesus effected many amazing cures. We have remarked that he relied upon physical contact of some sort as a means of cure. Here, where there were so many patients that he could not touch them all, they crowded near to touch *him*. It is not said here that he cured the demoniacs who threatened to reveal his secret; but this is implied in the subsequent charge that he 'by the prince of demons casts out demons.'

The only novel feature in this paragraph is the 'little boat,' kept in readiness as a means of escape from the crushing crowd. As the only concrete detail in this impressionist picture it stands out sharply. And it is precious to us because it connects this scene with the parables of chapter 4. In this first instance the boat seems not to have been needed as a means of escape, but later it occurred to Jesus to use it as a pulpit, from which he could address so great a crowd. And this appears to have been the boat in which he subsequently crossed and recrossed the sea—a visible thread binding these narratives together. The scenery in chapter 4 is obviously the same as that depicted in our present paragraph. There can be no doubt that on the lake shore Jesus was proclaiming the Gospel as well as healing people's diseases. The allegorical interpretation of the parable of the sower implies that Jesus had been preaching 'the word.' We must remember, however, that Jesus, though he refused to give an evident 'sign' that would substantiate his authority (Mk $8^{11, 12}$), regarded his works of healing as tokens which ought to lead men to suspect the nearness of the Kingdom of God (Mt $11^{2-6}$). 'Powers' is the word used in the Synoptic Gospels, which we commonly translate by 'mighty works.' The word miracle, because of the connotations it now has for us, we had better not use in this connection. For no one regarded these works of healing as superhuman, but only as supernormal. They were 'powers' which resided in this extraordinary man. Jesus could feel them going out of him by

contact ($5^{30}$). The healing of demoniacs, which was not accomplished by physical contact but by a mere word of command, was more obviously an exercise of ' authority ' ($1^{27}$), and with that therefore the opponents of Jesus had to deal trenchantly. It was clearly unreasonable of them to attribute his authority over demons to the prince of demons ; but that was the only alternative to recognizing in it ' the finger of God,' a proof of the near approach of God's Reign (Lk $11^{20}$).

In this part of St. Mark's narrative the chronological order is in conflict with the topical arrangement which the Evangelist now and then prefers. This paragraph, for example, deals exclusively with Jesus' cures, whereas chapter $4^{1-34}$ deals exclusively with teaching, though both refer to the same place and time. We do not have to suppose that he spent one day teaching and another day curing the sick. The Evangelist wishes to give us an idea of the principal activities of Jesus during as many days as he may have taught on the seashore. But during those days he did other things too. It is told in this connection how he climbed from the lake high up on the hill to find a place apart from the multitude where he could call to him the Twelve. In this connection too (because it follows the day of parables and because it continues the story of the ' boat '), we have the storm at sea, the landing in the ' country of the Gerasenes,' the return (presumably) to Capernaum, and the raising of Jairus' daughter. All this may very well have occurred, as the visit to Nazareth surely did, before Jesus' bitter contention with his own family and with the scribes who came from Jerusalem. But it could not be told in this order without hopelessly interrupting the chapter on conflicts.

So far as it is possible at all to reconstruct at this point the chronological order, it was nearly as follows. When controversy with the Pharisees had ripened into open conflict, Jesus withdrew from the synagogue (which offered, anyway, a theatre too small for the crowds that now came to him) and met the people daily outside of Capernaum on the shore of the lake. There, during a period of several days, he healed the sick and taught all the people by parables to expect the coming of the Kingdom of God. On one of

these days he retired further back upon the slope of the hill and there appointed the Twelve. We must suppose that he commonly spent the nights in Capernaum, in the customary place. But on one occasion, being already in the boat, he suggested that they row to the other side. That night they encountered a storm which Jesus quelled. In the morning they landed in a pagan country where he healed a dangerous demoniac. They returned that same day and found at Capernaum, not only the usual multitude, but the ruler of the synagogue, who had come to the seashore to fetch him to save his daughter who was at the point of death. After this Jesus went to Nazareth—and perhaps 'round about the villages'—before he encountered at Capernaum the scribes from Jerusalem and was obliged to renounce his own family.

It is not clear whether the Twelve after their appointment were continually with Jesus. That is the implication of $4^{12}$: 'When he was alone, his adherents and the Twelve asked him about the parable.' But it is by no means certain that all of the Twelve accompanied him on the trip across the lake, and when he got back and was approaching the house of Jairus he allowed only the Three to follow him. When he went to Nazareth he was followed by 'his disciples,' which may include more than the Twelve. But immediately after that in the narrative it is said that he had to 'summon the Twelve,' when he was about to send them on their mission ($6^{7}$). However that may be, not many days elapsed between the appointment of the Twelve and their mission, and from that time on they are always found in Jesus' company, except on two occasions, when the Three (Peter, James, and John) were again distinguishable as his only companions—not to speak of the last occasion when all were with him, and 'all forsook him and fled.'

¶ 18. The Appointment of the Twelve.

Mk $3^{13-19}$. **And he ascended the hillside and summoned the men he wanted, and they went to him. [14]And he appointed twelve, whom he called apostles, to be with him and also to be sent forth to proclaim the Gospel, [15]with authority to cast out demons. [16]And he appointed the Twelve: Peter (which was the name he gave to Simon),**

**[17] and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (and he called them Boanerges, which means sons of thunder), [18] and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, [19] and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.**

The Evangelist evidently intends to represent that between this paragraph and the one immediately preceding it there is a concrete connection. This is altogether plausible. Jesus got away for a time from the crowds on the seashore, and from his retreat on the hillside sent to summon the people he wanted. It is not clear whether this means only twelve men, or a larger company from whom the Twelve were eventually chosen. At all events, all who were summoned 'went to him.' The Evangelist mentions expressly their obedience to show what authority Jesus exercised over men—as in the case of the first disciples, who followed him 'at once' in response to their 'call.'

But if this beginning is concretely historical, the rest of the paragraph is not. It is not so much an historical narrative as an historical picture—of the familiar sort that poses all the actors at once in conspicuous attitudes on the stage, distinguishing them if possible by their well-known attributes, without regard to when they were earned. We are not obliged to suppose that the title of Apostles was bestowed upon these twelve men before they were sent forth (*apostellein*) on their mission to Galilee. There on the mountain it may not have been made clear that they were to be put to such a use. It was not a very necessary service they rendered, for Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God seems to have been heard already throughout Galilee. It may not even have been obvious at once that they were to become Jesus' constant companions. As for the individual attributes which distinguish them one from another, the name of Peter (Cephas—the Rock) was given to Simon at a later date (according to Mt $16^{18}$), and it is likely that the sons of Zebedee received their common name on some occasion when they displayed the violence of their passions. Besides these three, none of the Twelve had distinctive

attributes as Christian disciples, till we come to 'Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.' That attribute too was earned at a later time. A second Simon is described as a 'Zealot,' indicating that he had belonged to the most reckless party of Jewish nationalists. But that was an attribute which he dropped on becoming a disciple of Jesus. It is surprising that Andrew is here separated from his brother and enumerated among the undistinguished Apostles. So thought Matthew and Luke, and they put him in his proper place (Mt $10^2$; Lk $6^{14}$). But in the Acts ($1^{13}$) Luke betrays the fact that the traditional list of the Apostles as he knew it agreed with the order Mark gives. Andrew occupies the fourth place, even when only the first four disciples are mentioned (Mk $13^3$). And in the Synoptic Gospels James is always preferred to John. The Fourth Gospel seeks to invert this order, representing John as the favourite disciple. But it also aims to bring into prominence the obscure disciples about whom nothing distinctive is related by the Synoptists. Andrew is favoured (it was he that called Peter !), Philip is made very prominent, Thomas plays an interesting part, and there is an imposing disciple named Nathanael, whom commentators like to identify with Bartholomew. This thing of knowing everybody's name, and who said what, gives an impression of first-hand information. But really it is characteristic of late tradition. The Synoptic tradition knew nothing whatever about eight of the Twelve Apostles except the fact that they were called —and that Judas was the betrayer. From St. Paul we get the impression that after the martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee none of the original Apostles were active except Peter and John. On the other hand, the James who presided at Jerusalem was known as a 'brother of the Lord'—therefore not one of the original disciples, for St. John ($7^5$) says rightly that in the days of his flesh 'his brethren did not believe on him.' In the Gentile mission we have the names of several 'Apostles' besides Barnabas and Saul. But the further we get from those early days, the more people knew about the Twelve. By the fourth century they could tell in what country each had been a missionary and how he had come to his death. As a matter of fact, there is

nothing known about any of the Twelve Apostles, except the inmost group of three, and it is not likely that they ever did anything worth reporting. But collectively they were witnesses of the Lord's resurrection, and the service they collectively rendered was perhaps essential to the Church in its beginnings. The notion of an 'Apostolic college' was not a mere fiction. At all events, the very idea of law and formal authority in the Church is founded upon this notion. But who the Twelve Apostles actually were was no longer known when the earliest traditional lists were drawn up. St. Luke has a 'Judas son of James' in place of the 'Thaddaeus' of Matthew and Mark. That St. Mark is reciting here a list which he did not invent is proved by the fact that he has omitted Levi, whose call he had narrated a short while before. The Gospel which bears the name of St. Matthew covers over this defect by giving the converted publican the name of Matthew. But that does not in the least help St. Mark's account. All we can say is that St. Mark inserted here a traditional list which did not quite agree with his story. The awkward repetition, 'And he appointed the Twelve,' is due evidently to the phrasing of this list. The still more awkward insertion of the well-known surnames may have been the Evangelist's doing.

The fact that such lists were current at so early a time shows how much importance was attached to the Apostolate, and the uncertainty about individual Apostles casts no doubt upon the institution of the Twelve. The meaning of it, though it is not explained here, is obvious. It is not enough to say that it was symbolical of the whole of Israel: it was precisely an apocalyptic symbol. It was not therefore an indication of a narrow nationalistic aim, though it did reveal to Jesus' enemies that he had in view a nation-wide movement and had the astonishing presumption to put himself at the head of it. That was the manifest significance of the appointment of the Twelve. For that purpose it was not necessary to choose individuals of marked capacity. It was enough if he found men who were willing to leave all for the sake of following him. Since it is evident that he chose Judas unwisely, we need have no difficulty in admitting that not all the others were wisely chosen.

But instead of wondering at his choice of very ordinary and incompetent men, we might face the question whether better material was available among the crowds that followed him. St. Mark observes that Jesus bestowed upon these men a very remarkable competence, the 'authority to cast out demons.' Something more than that was needed for the evangelization of the world—for such a work as Paul and Barnabas and others performed, and which only two of the original Apostles proved capable of doing. A saying preserved by St. Matthew ($13^{52}$) suggests that Jesus appreciated the importance of an educated ministry: 'Every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who produces from his stores things new and old.' But there were no scribes in Galilee who would have answered to his call.

St. Luke ($6^{12, 13}$) adds to St. Mark's condensed account details which, if they are not well founded, are well invented, for they explain how Jesus managed to escape from the crowds, and how he assembled his chosen disciples on the mountain. It was in the evening he went off to the mountain 'to pray,' and having 'spent the whole night in prayer to God,' at daybreak he summoned his disciples and chose twelve *etc.* It has been prettily said that this was the first ember prayer—the prayer used before the season of ordination. That leads us to remark that the Apostles were *not* ordained—they were simply 'appointed.' The laying on of hands was a custom which sprang up in the Church, without claiming the support of Jesus' precept or example. It was not at first associated with the appointment of office-bearers, but was the ordinary sequel of baptism. Matthias was appointed to be an Apostle in the place of Judas, but he was not ordained, only 'selected' (by lot). The first office-bearers to be ordained by the laying on of hands were the Seven (Acts $6^{5, 6}$), and it hardly seems as if this rite was then regarded as a method of imparting the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as Stephen at least was said to be 'full' of it before his ordination. Barnabas and Saul did indeed have hands laid on them (Acts $13^{2, 3}$), after they had been chosen by prophecy following an ember prayer. But these were not the hands of their superiors or even of their equals.

Mindful of a well-known maxim, we must say that these were hands which transmitted what they had not themselves received. Or else we must say that they were hands which did not pretend to transmit, but only to attest. In fact, it is impossible to prove that the laying on of hands in ordination was conceived, even in the early Catholic development, to involve more than formal recognition. It was by *shaking hands* with them that the Apostolic ' pillars ' of the Church gave their formal recognition to Barnabas and Paul (Gal. $2^{9}$). Even in the time of Cyprian (as we see from *Epist.* 59) the act of laying on of hands might be treated as a negligible detail in the process of appointing a bishop. Election with the consent of fellow-bishops was regarded as more material proof of a divine calling. It is certain that mere ordination by the laying on of hands was not *then* counted sufficient to make a man a bishop, or even regarded as the principal element in appointment, although it was an invariable concomitant. The English bishops, appointed by the Crown, would not have been regarded by the early Church as true bishops—or at least not for the mere reason that they were ordained. The Lambeth Conference of 1920 laid just emphasis upon the importance of some formal act to insure the ' recognition ' of a common ministry, and it rightly refrained from defining by what act such universal recognition might be bestowed. I have argued (in *Problems of Church Unity*, pp. 276 ff.) that, as matters now stand, it is hopeless to expect the universal recognition of a ministry which is not episcopally ordained. But it is equally hopeless to expect that all will agree to regard this practical necessity as an ideal necessity prescribed by divine law. We see here that the Gospel gives it no countenance. It cannot be accepted as a universal rule without great humility on *both* sides: on the side of those who receive such ordination when they are conscious of being already ' full of the Holy Ghost '; and on the side of those who give it there must be enough humility to suppress the presumption that they are imparting a new *charisma*. Moreover, ordination must not be regarded as the only and sufficient title to ' recognition.' In appointment to the ministry there are other elements of paramount importance. First and foremost is the ' choice

of fit persons,' which is what the ember prayer asks for. That is all-important. And whatever custom or ceremony witnesses to a wise choice is also an effective plea for recognition. While the machinery for insuring universal recognition of the ministry is lacking, it would seem reasonable for all who are enlightened to recognize as ' competent ministers of the new covenant ' all such as are *duly* accredited, and especially those who come with ' the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' None ought to be chosen for the ministry, and none ought to be recognized, but such as have the ' power to cast out demons.' Them we can recognize (according to Jesus' word) ' by their fruits.'

¶¶ 19–21. The Bitterest Experience in Galilee.

¶ 19. Mk $3^{20-35}$. **Then they went indoors, but the crowd gathered again so that it was impossible for them even to have a meal. [21]And when his family knew what was going on they set out to get hold of him, for they said that he was ' out of his mind.'**

¶ 20. **[22] But the scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, ' He has Beelzebul, and it is by the prince of demons he drives out demons.' [23] So he called them to him and said to them in parables :**

**' How can Satan drive out Satan ?**
**[24] If a kingdom is divided against itself,**
**that kingdom cannot stand.**
**[25] If a household is divided against itself,**
**that household cannot stand.**
**[26] So if Satan has risen against himself and is divided,**
**he cannot stand—his end is near.**
**[27] No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless first of all he binds the strong man—**
**then he can plunder his house.**
**[28] With an *amen* I declare unto you :**
**Everything shall be forgiven to men,—**
**their sins and all the blasphemies they may utter,—**
**[29] but whoever blasphemes against the holy Spirit is never forgiven, he is guilty of an eternal sin.'**
**[30] (This was because they said, ' He has an unclean spirit.')**

¶ 21. **[31] Then came his brothers and his mother, and standing outside they sent to call him. [32] There was a crowd sitting around, and he was told, ‘ Outside are your mother and brothers and sisters.’ [33] And his answer was, ‘ Who are my mother and my brothers ? ’ [34] And looking around upon those who were seated in a circle about him, he said, ‘ Here are my mother and my brothers. [35] Whoever does God’s will, he is my brother—and sister and mother.’**

There are several distinguishable strands in this story, but they cannot be separated without dulling the impression of the whole, and quite obliterating the point of at least one of the factors. This, as we shall see, is not the only case where Mark has woven divers threads into a fabric which cannot be rent asunder without great loss. The successful fabrication of a composite story such as this is proof either of consummate art or of simple truth-telling. As Mark is evidently not a literary artist, we must conclude that he is reporting what actually occurred in the precise connection in which he records it. All the more because the marks of unity in this composition are so unapparent that they will hardly be observed without sharp attention. I dwell on this matter because this is the sort of thing which convinces me that in this Gospel we are frequently handling the historical thing-in-itself. The sharpest criticism of such passages as I have now in mind has only the effect of establishing the accuracy of the narrative. And when we note that the changes which Matthew and Luke thought good to make not only rob Mark’s story of its point but weaken its plausibility, we get some measure of Mark’s nearness to reality. Several of Mark’s stories give the impression that an eyewitness is telling the tale ; and this impression is due in part to such trifling details that even the hypothesis of Peter in the background hardly suffices to explain them. I am compelled to suppose that in some passages Mark’s verbal memory reproduced (in translation) the very words of Peter and enabled him to tell the story better than he knew how. For there are other passages which do not give the impression that we have to do with an eyewitness, and we shall encounter serious dislocations in this Gospel

which prove either that Mark did not thoroughly understand the story or that his text has been tampered with by an editor. Perhaps both of these conclusions may be justified.

We can no longer take comfort in the simile which compares the four Gospels to a four-ply rope. The Fourth Gospel never did fit well to that figure. And the Synoptists, now that we know they were dependent upon common sources, cannot be regarded as independent authorities. But for the loss of that sort of assurance we have a preponderant gain—a gain, however, which is available only to those who frankly renounce the old effort to harmonize the Gospels and are ready to recognize their 'errancy.' One who thus grasps the nettle will find in the aberrations of the Evangelists confirmation of their sources. We have immeasurably more confidence in the historicity of Mark's narrative when we see that Matthew and Luke can make no changes in it without spoiling it, and we have reason to believe that the source 'Q,' which is common to Matthew and Luke, is a document of equal value and perhaps even greater antiquity. Unfortunately, we know its text accurately only where the two Evangelists have agreed not to change it.

We are to-day in a very different position from the famous men who about the middle of last century wrote the great biographies of Jesus and fixed the character of all the popular works which were to follow. Then St. Matthew was generally accounted the fundamental Gospel, and as that obviously was not historical in the strictest sense, the biographers felt free to exercise their imagination. We are not so free to-day; and if anyone were now bold enough to write a biography of Jesus, he would have to cling to the text of St. Mark as closely as I do in this humble commentary—though he would be freer than I am here to enrich his picture with the precious sayings which are preserved by Matthew and Luke.

The points I have dwelt upon above are illustrated in the passage we have now to study. Both Matthew ($12^{46-50}$) and Luke ($8^{19-21}$), for example, have the story of Jesus' mother and brethren coming to seek him. But as they

rend it from its proper connection, the tale has only the point which is given it by Jesus' serene word at the end. There is no apparent motive for the harsh saying, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' For as both Evangelists have suppressed the explanation of this visit—that his family were coming from Nazareth to take possession of him as a madman—it seems as if his mother and his brothers were merely making him a friendly visit, and Jesus appears unreasonable in his refusal to see them.

It is an inconspicuous detail of Mark's narrative which Matthew and Luke conspire to suppress. Nevertheless it is a 'pillar passage,' judged by Schmiedel's criterion. It is not possible to suppose that one of the Evangelists gratuitously invented a fact which the others felt obliged to suppress as a scandal. It was an unwelcome aspersion upon the mother of our Lord, that she was capable of doubting her son's sanity. But it was also dangerous for the reputation of Jesus. The enemies of the Church might make bad use of such a hint. Even in modern times this story has encouraged psychologists and psychiatrists to assert that Jesus was indeed insane. One of the oldest texts (Codex D) avoids both difficulties by making Mk $3^{21}$ to read, 'the scribes said, He is driving the people mad.'

But St. Mark's statement is necessary to explain Jesus' repudiation of his family. It also serves as the immediate occasion for the scribes who had just come from Jerusalem to make the suggestion that Jesus' evident madness must be ascribed to demoniacal possession—'He has an unclean spirit.' The superstitious people would be only too ready to accept such an explanation for Jesus' extraordinary conduct—more especially when it was suggested to them by revered religious authorities. These very superior scribes, who were not in awe of Jesus as were the provincial scribes of Galilee, ventured to go a step further. They suggested that this explanation would account for his notorious authority over other unclean spirits. The evil spirit that possessed him was the prince of all demons.

This, too, is clearly a 'pillar passage.' In spite of its offensiveness, it is not omitted either by Matthew or Luke. Perhaps because they found it also in 'Q.' It must have

stood there, for both these Evangelists have it in a connection which is strange to Mark, following the casting out of a 'dumb demon' (Mt $12^{22-24}$; Lk $11^{14-15}$; and perhaps a second time in Mt $9^{32-34}$). And Matthew ($10^{25}$) preserves also a saying which shows how deeply Jesus was stung by this charge: 'If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household.' But this charge furnishes in turn the proof (unwelcome though it may be) that Jesus actually did cast out demons and that his authority over them was notorious.

This was evidently the bitterest experience Jesus had in Galilee. And the cumulation of troubles—one thing on top of another—made the attack all the harder to bear. His enemies attacked him with the grossest insult, but his family by their uncomprehending solicitude had furnished the occasion for it. We have seen reason to place his visit to Nazareth shortly before this moment, and it is plausible to suppose that his lack of success there (his inability to perform any miracles because of their lack of faith, according to Mk $6^{6}$) gave occasion for the suspicion that he was out of his mind. Jesus' saying on that occasion implies that his own family were touched by this suspicion: 'A prophet is not without honour except in his native place and among his kindred and in his home.' The passage we are now studying implies that this serious rumour reached Capernaum in advance of Jesus' family, so that it was known before they arrived with what purpose they were coming.

It was not merely for climatic effect St. Mark put this incident last in his series of controversies and conflicts. It was in fact a climax—the beginning of the end of his stay in Galilee. From this time forth he is constantly on the move, as though hastening towards the moment of his departure.

Such details of the story as have not already been dealt with we must take up now in their proper order.

Though not all of St. Mark's stories are told in their proper historical sequence, it is never safe to *presume* that they are not. In this instance it is plausible to suppose that Jesus has been with the multitude on the seashore and comes into Capernaum to pass the night in the house that had become his home. We have seen that he did not

always come into the town. One night he spent on the mountain in prayer, before he appointed the Twelve. Another night he was crossing the lake in a storm. Here, however, the scene is expressly laid ' indoors,' and the unity of place as well as unity of time is perfectly observed in the narrative. This fact is the more significant because the indications of it are too obscure to be ascribed to artful or even conscious design. The scribes are outside, and when Jesus learns of their slander he calls them to him—into the house, or to the door of it. When at last his family arrive they are standing ' outside,' and *within* Jesus is surrounded by his most faithful disciples, both men and women. All that is here described may well have happened during one evening. The next chapter transfers the scene appropriately to the seashore, where Jesus utters the parables of the Kingdom, and after that he is found again alone with the Twelve and his other faithful adherents. It seems likely that it was in the comparative seclusion of the house he interpreted the parable of the sower. We have in fact no assurance that these parables were uttered *after* the calumny of the scribes. This is not even likely. But it is interesting to note that these last days in Capernaum run parallel with the last days in Jerusalem, when Jesus taught publicly every day in the Temple and in the evening retired with his disciples to the Mount of Olives.

' Beelzebul.' I should not be inclined to alter the traditional English rendering of this word, if nothing more were involved than a pedantic question of spelling or pronunciation—the exchange of an ' l ' for a ' b.' But the difference between Beelzebub and Beelzebul is too material to be overlooked here. We learn from 2 Kings $1^{2, 3, 16}$ that Baal-zebub (Beelzebub being the Aramaic corruption of this name) was that particular Baal which was worshipped by the Philistines at Akron. It meant *Lord of flies*, which seems to us a queer name for a god, but certainly was not meant disparagingly by his worshippers. It was just like the Jews to treat a pagan god as a sort of head devil. And we do not resent this insulting treatment of a *baal*, because even the most emancipated spirits among us are still influenced by Old Testament prejudices. In fact, the Syrian

baals were not much better or worse than other gods. They were regarded as equivalent to Zeus or Jupiter, and under the Servian emperors the cult of Baal was very fashionable in Rome among sophisticated people. It seems to me high time that we should give up our Biblical prejudice. A Baal cult might prove very popular in America. Many people are now worshipping Baal without knowing it, for Philistines are always in a majority. At all events, our finer sensibilities must be shocked by the coarseness of the Jewish jest which made this *Lord of flies* more hateful and ridiculous by changing the last letter of his name to 'l,' thus making him the *Lord of dung*. This disgusting name was used by the superior scribes from Jerusalem to express their contempt for such a man as Jesus.

The substance of their charge was that Jesus was 'possessed' by the 'ruler of demons,' for whom their proper name was Satan. Jesus ignores the more opprobrious epithet and answers only the substantial charge. He was not content with persuading his faithful band of disciples that this insinuation was unjust. He was bold enough to call these superior scribes to him and answer them to their face. And well he might, for they had overreached themselves in making this charge. The popular notion of 'possession' regarded the possessed person as a victim, not responsible for his words and actions. Perhaps not an innocent victim, for it is hardly to be supposed that anyone can fall under the power of a devil without inwardly consenting to evil. Yet, in any case, he was a victim to be pitied, and if possible to be relieved. If the case were really imaginable that Satan himself had deigned to take control of a man, the revered religious leaders from Jerusalem would have showed themselves more superior had they undertaken to cast out Satan and restore Jesus to his right mind. On the contrary, they acted as if Jesus were responsible and were himself making use of the prince of demons that possessed him in order to cast out inferior demons. The notion that a man, by means of a talisman or magical word, may attain power over an evil spirit and subject him to his will has been made familiar to us by the Arabian Nights. But it is not

likely that such a notion prevailed widely amongst the Jews. In any case it would not have served the purpose of these scribes, for to have possession *of* a devil was quite a different thing from being possessed *by* it, and such uncanny power could reflect only credit upon the possessor.

Jesus' reply, therefore, was frank and cogent. The assumption really was that not he but Satan was casting out evil spirits. What a rôle for Satan to be playing! It was really 'Satan casting out Satan'—how can that be? And if it were so—what must the consequence be? The *reductio ad absurdum* is exchanged at this point for an *argumentum ad hominem*: the scribes ought to perceive that, as a result of such anarchy as they imply (Satan against Satan), the kingdom of evil is surely and swiftly coming to an end, and God's rule is about to be manifested. The conclusion is true even though the premise (*ad hominem*) is fallacious. Out of the gross insult that was offered him Jesus constructs a cheerful parable of the Kingdom of God. Rather, a pair of parables—as was often his way of arguing. And they are parables in the strictest sense. No need of apologizing for them, as Goodspeed does when he says that Jesus here spoke 'in figures,' and as Moffatt also does when he translates: 'by way of a parable.' Most people cannot recognize a parable even when it has its label. Wright's Synopsis heads the next chapter with the title, 'A New Departure in Teaching'—as though St. Mark had not already reported seven parables, and affirmed also that this was Jesus' habitual way of teaching. Man is strangely unobservant of the things that are closest to his eye or most nearly concern him—as Nietzsche brings home to us by the query, 'How many of you have noticed that long-shaped eggs have a more delicious taste than those that are rounder?' Here, I say, we have an example of perfect parables. Indeed the argument is here constructed more completely and more formally than anywhere else. It is as formal as a syllogism. Starting from the thesis that *Satan drives out Satan,* it is proved by analogy that Satan's position is insecure—his end must be near. Two analogies are better than one. The first is an apt one: it is the example of a '*kingdom* divided against itself'—an exact

analogy to Satan's kingdom. The fate of such a kingdom is notorious. But a more familiar analogy is the discordant family, 'a *household* divided against itself.' Everyone had opportunity to observe what is the end of such a family. The conclusion, as it is here expressed, is more than an inference; it is Jesus' glad conviction: '*He cannot stand —his end is near.*'

From that assertion Jesus naturally slips into allegory. Strictly speaking, the saying which follows is only a parable so far as it could be understood by the scribes. But by no means a perfect parable, being distorted by the allegorical intention. The parable which glimmers through the allegorical veil is to the effect that, so far from robbing his own house, a strong man will not allow his house to be robbed until he himself is reduced to impotence. Allegory is not serviceable as *proof*: it is merely a mode of expression. Here Jesus uses it for his own satisfaction only, as a mode of self-expression, an outlet for his feeling. For that reason this saying is peculiarly precious to us, for there is nothing we so much desire to hear from Jesus as an intimate revelation of himself. Here we have it—the most intimate that has been handed down to us. Satan is indeed 'a strong man'; but Jesus has already showed himself to be 'stronger than he' (that is Luke's interpretive phrase) by casting out his minions; he is about to reduce to impotence this strong man, and then he will 'plunder his goods,' *i.e.* put an end to his reign. St. Luke ($11^{20}$; *cp.* Mt $12^{28}$) records in this connection a saying which he learns from 'Q' and which certainly was uttered by Jesus: 'If it is by the finger of God I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God is imminent.'

Here we have Jesus' most intimate self-revelation—whether we like it or not. And how can we like it when we have been accustomed to think of Jesus as a sensible man. *Now*, the charge that he was out of his mind seems not so extravagant. Peter would not have 'seized him and rebuked him,' if he had not had some such suspicion when Jesus for the first time spoke clearly of the necessity of his being killed and rising from the dead ($8^{31-33}$). It is bad enough that we should have here the proof that Jesus

seriously believed he was casting out demons. It is far worse when we have to recognize that he conceived of himself as being engaged in a cosmical drama, as God's champion in the stupendous conflict with the invisible powers of evil. And what becomes of *our* Kingdom of God, which we so zealously are labouring to bring about? It is a great disillusion to us if we must confess that we cannot even co-operate effectively to establish such a kingdom as Jesus thought of (God's Reign), and that we are reduced to the passive rôle of postulants seeking to enter into such a kingdom—in short, that we are the saved, and Christ is the Saviour. How can we like that? It is thoroughgoing eschatology. But there it is: if we don't like it, we can lump it. And perhaps after all we might feel that somehow it is preferable to have a Christ we can be amazed at, stand in awe of, and adore. This thing fits in better with the traditional cult of Jesus Christ and with the extravagant terms of the Nicene Creed—about both of which things we have had an uneasy conscience of late. Jesus may not have been a supernatural person, but evidently he believed that he was—and that simplifies the problem. At any rate, Barth seems to be justified in saying that 'a Christianity which is not altogether and utterly eschatological has altogether and utterly nothing to do with Jesus Christ.'

Jesus' allegory was understood by no one except himself. But his last word is clear and solemn. For its solemnity he prepares us by his characteristic preface, '*Amen* say I unto you.' That introduction always indicates a saying which is clear as well as emphatic. 'Hard sayings' (that is, sayings hard to accept) are sometimes prefaced by this formula, but (according to the Synoptic tradition) none that are hard to understand—not even a parable, to say nothing of allegories. The word *amen* means pretty much the same as the familiar 'verily' in our older English versions, or the 'truly' of our very modern translators. But it seems a pity that those who can read the Bible only in English should be given no hint of the fact that Jesus had the custom of introducing his most solemn sayings with an *Amen*. It is the more worth

remarking because, so far as we know, this was a custom absolutely peculiar to him (so Dalman affirms). Probably for this reason, and because Jesus made this custom impressive, the Evangelists retain the Hebrew word in their Greek Gospels. And for this reason I retain it here—in spite of the fact that it must sound strange to ears that are accustomed to *Amen* only at the end of prayers. Many suppose that it means no more than *finis*, and those who boast of more instruction have most of them been misled (by Lutheran and Anglican catechisms) into thinking that it means ' so be it.' If this were its meaning, it would not be appropriate for the use Jesus makes of it. In fact it means *truth* or *truly*—but with a difference which is peculiarly Hebraic. That is to say, it means, not truth-telling as the opposite of lying, nor even truth in the sense of an accurate and adequate expression in words of what is true, but it means the very thing that is true, the Truth, absolute reality. Therefore it is not as a conclusion of every prayer, but almost exclusively as the conclusion of doxologies, that it is used in the New Testament. *There* it is in place. All other truths are relative. Truths of science and truths of history are things which ' we know in part ' and which we know in vain, unless they lead up to the perception of the ultimate reality that ' to God belongs the glory,' and to that we say *Amen*. The Lord's Prayer had no *Amen* before the Church added the doxology. Jesus himself is called ' the Amen.' And with this word he prefaces his solemn sayings—not as a superfluous assertion of his veracity, but as a signal that what he is about to say is the deepest reality. This is my apology for following the example of the Roman Church (the Vulgate), instead of obscuring, as all Protestant translators have agreed to do, the only characteristic trait of Jesus' speech that has been transmitted to us.

The saying which here is introduced by the *Amen* is both clear and solemn :

> Everything shall be forgiven to men,—
> their sins and all the blasphemies they may utter,—
> but whoever blasphemes against the holy Spirit is never forgiven,
> he is guilty of an eternal sin.

These words vibrate with passion. And the notion that there is one unforgivable sin has ever since obsessed men's minds. There is no need to speculate what this sin is, for the Evangelist tells us in parenthesis: 'This was because they said, He has an unclean spirit.' That the Spirit of God—the one, the only holy—so clearly manifested in 'doing good to people' and in liberating men from demons, should be confounded with the 'unclean' (that is, the unholy) spirit of evil—how great is that blasphemy! 'How great is that darkness!'

But men have been so wholly obsessed by this concluding word that they have failed to notice the much more surprising sentence by which it is introduced: 'Everything shall be forgiven to men!' All their sins, and even their blasphemies! That is hardly credible. And yet it is just like Jesus: it is the essence of his Gospel.

On top of all this came the hardest rub of all. Jesus was prepared for it, yet more bitter than the rumour of their coming must have been the knowledge that they were *there* —'his mother and brothers and sisters'—waiting outside the door to take possession of him. Evidently the father was no longer living, who might alone have exercised sufficient authority; and so the whole family came, to win him by their affectionate solicitude to an obedience which they could not command. Their lack of faith in him was one of the many sins (or blasphemies, if you choose) which God, according to Jesus' recent word, was ready to forgive —and how much more their son and brother. If this family had not loved Jesus, they would not have come to save him from his delusions. And if Jesus had not himself received and reciprocated family love, he would not have reckoned the relinquishing of these dear relationships as the hardest act of renunciation (next to hating his own life) which could be required of a disciple (Lk 14[26]; *cp.* Mt 10[37]). In thesis, the readiness to make even that sacrifice was required of every disciple, but only in rare cases did conditions actually require it. Peter after his call continued to live with his wife and mother-in-law (1[30]); and though he and the other Apostles were inclined to boast that they had 'left all' when they followed Jesus to Jerusalem (10[28]), that proved

to be only a temporary renunciation of their families. We learn incidentally from St. Paul (1 Cor. $9^{6}$) that only he and Barnabas among the Apostles were unmarried, whereas 'the rest of the Apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas' had their wives with them even when they travelled. But Jesus knew from his own experience that such a renunciation might be necessary 'for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake,' and in requiring it of his disciples he was asking for no greater sacrifice than he himself had made. *Interimsethik* demands heroic acts, and on occasion it may cut sheer across the ordinary rules of morality, even such as are registered in the Ten Commandments and are specially commended by Jesus (Mt $15^{3-6}$).

Jesus was now obliged to face such a conflict of duty. No doubt he had already discounted this necessity, and in a sense he had made his renunciations in the desert, before he stepped forth to proclaim the Gospel of God. But *we* know that resolutions and renunciations, even if they are made 'once for all,' have to be made over and over again. Jesus once used a phrase which implies that he regarded his whole public life as a series of temptations' (Lk $22^{28}$). The necessity of breaking formally with his family must have been one of the hardest of these tests of character. We are not surprised that he was equal to the test, but it is very wonderful that he could find a way of doing so graciously so ungraceful a thing, turning a harsh act into a beautiful deed. *'Who are my mother and my brothers?'* That reply is so absolute, so complete, that, if it stood alone, we must count it inhuman. This man does not know who his mother is, who his brothers are! He treats them as if they had never been. And himself he deems superior to the need of such human relationships. But how can the renunciation of one's family be anything but a negation, and a harsh one at that? Is there any beautiful way of telling your mother that you will henceforth have nothing more to do with her? Yes, Jesus found such a way. And after all we ought not to wonder that *he* found it, 'not being less but more than all the gentleness he seemed to be.' In a final accord he resolved the harsh dissonance of his negation. 'Looking around upon those who were seated in a circle about

him, he said, '*Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God's will, he is my brother—and sister and mother.*'

We must not suppose, however, that in the companionship of his disciples Jesus found the complete satisfaction of his social nature. He was always 'the lonely man.' When I read of Chinese emperors of olden times who applied that phrase to themselves, I always think of Jesus. He was 'the lonely man,' not because he felt no need of human sympathy, and certainly not because he did not sympathize, but simply because he could not count upon understanding. His Apostles (assuming that Peter was St. Mark's informant) were frank enough to let us know how little they understood their rabbi. Jesus was not petulant about that: he understood that they *could not* understand. But the consequence was that he was lonely among his friends. Perhaps he was less lonely when he was quite alone . . . with God. If Jesus was impatient with his disciples, it was not because of their lack of understanding of him, but because of their lack of faith . . . in God. In one case (Mt 17[17]) there escaped from him an exclamation which is a revelation of his homesickness . . . not for Nazareth: 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long must I still be with you? how long have I to bear with you?' Incidentally, Mark (10[32]) gives us a hint of Jesus' aloofness: 'They were marching along the road to Jerusalem, Jesus walking in front of them, and the disciples were dismayed, and the company that followed were afraid.' That picture would be intolerably grim if we did not remember that a moment before he had been putting his arms around the children, had been deeply moved by the case of a rich man, and had answered with light banter the Apostles' boast that they had 'left all' for his sake.

We cannot read this story without thinking of implications which the Evangelist seems to have made no account of. Principally we are compelled to reflect upon the part that the mother of Jesus is made to play. Even though we take no account here of the specific dogma of the Immaculate Conception, it is clear that the place which the mother of Jesus holds in the Catholic (and Orthodox) religion is incompatible with anything short of immaculate character

and immaculate conduct. A Catholic can derive no comfort from the reflection that the Mother of God was in all points tempted like as we are and was even a sinner like us. There is comfort for us in the stories which reveal the weakness of Peter and the other Apostles, their lack of understanding and of faith and of courage . . . who yet became able ministers of Christ and heroic martyrs. All the saints can furnish us with *this* encouragement and with an all-too-human comprehension of our failings. But the pitifulness of *her* great mercy is not of this quality. Theoretically it might be tolerable to admit that she was capable of an error of judgment—but hardly such an error as involved disbelief in her divine son.

But the difficulty here is not for Catholics alone The cult of the Virgin Mother has its roots in the New Testament. And if all is true that is told us in the early chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke, how is it possible that the mother of Jesus believed him to be ' out of his mind ' because he presumed so much ? The full measure of his presumption was not then even suspected.

Matthew and Luke felt this difficulty, and therefore they obscured the point of this story. We may wonder that they did not alter the whole Gospel narrative to make it consistent with their introduction. They might have represented the mother in the company of her son, sympathizing with him in his triumphs and his trials. They do not even venture to place her beneath the cross (as John does). It is true, the women were *there*, after all the male disciples had fled—but they were ' afar off.' And of the Marys which are mentioned by Matthew ($27^{56}$), Mark ($15^{40}$), and Luke ($24^{12}$) none is clearly identified as the mother of Jesus. That is strange, for it seems as if the Mary who is described as ' the mother of James and Joses ' must have been she. No brothers bearing these names were famous in the Church except the brothers of Jesus. Four brothers are enumerated in connection with the visit to Nazareth (Mk $6^{3}$ ; *cp.* Mt $13^{55}$) ; ' James and Joses and Judas and Simon.' St. Luke in his lists of the Apostles (Lk $6^{16}$ ; Acts $1^{13}$) introduces a Judas whom he describes as either a son or brother of James. It is all very confusing. The Gospels were

evidently not written with the purpose of satisfying our curiosity. But for his obscurity in the Gospel St. Luke makes some amends in the Acts ($1^{14}$), where he says, after enumerating the Apostles, ' These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.' So the mother *was* there in Jerusalem ; doubtless she was a witness of the Crucifixion, and now she is a believer. Also the Lord's brethren were there, and they were reckoned among the chief of his disciples. To use a quaint phrase of Jeremy Taylor's, there seems to be ' more truth than evidence ' on the side of the precarious suggestions we have been following. And there are other suggestions incidentally furnished by St. Paul. In Gal. $1^{19}$ he speaks of ' James the Lord's brother ' as the only ' Apostle ' he saw in Jerusalem besides Cephas. This was the James who is represented in the Acts as the head of the Church in Jerusalem and the revered authority for all the Christian Jews of the dispersion. That is not strange since he was the Lord's brother, for the history of Islam shows us how natural it was for a Semitic people to insist that the succession even of religious authority should follow in the line of blood relationship—as it did in Jerusalem for several generations. What is strange is that this brother of the Lord should have become a ' Christian.' St. Paul incidentally explains this when he reports (1 Cor. $15^{7}$) that after his resurrection the Lord appeared to James. From another incidental statement of St. Paul's it appears that others (perhaps all) of the brothers of the Lord were converted and were regarded as no less than Apostles. Jesus showed his love for his family when the need of holding aloof from them was past.

It would have been comforting if St. Mark had told us this as a sequel to the sad story about the effort of the mother and the brothers to get possession of Jesus and save him from making a fool of himself. But evidently the Gospels were not written to satisfy our curiosity about such matters as this. They were all of them written with the same intent that St. John expresses : ' That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name.'

## Section 4. ¶¶ 22–32

## PARABLES

### Mk 4 1-34

¶ 22. Mk 4[1–34]. Again he began to teach by the seashore, and the crowd that gathered about him was greater than ever, so that he stepped into a boat and sat there, floating on the water, while all the people were on the land near the water. [2] He taught them many things in parables, and in the course of his teaching he said to them :

¶ 23. [3] 'Attend ! A sower went out to sow. [4] And as he sowed some of the seed chanced to fall on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. [5] Some of it fell on rocky ground where there was not much soil, and it sprang up at once because the soil was not deep ; [6] but when the sun got high it was scorched and withered away because it had no root. [7] And some of the seed fell among spiny weeds, and the weeds sprang up and choked it, so that it bore no crop. [8] And some seed fell on good soil and bore a crop which sprang up and grew, yielding thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold.
[9] And he said, 'Who has ears to hear, let him *hear!*'

¶ 24. [10] And when he was alone his adherents and the Twelve asked him about the parable. [11] And he said to them, 'To you has been entrusted the secret of the Kingdom of God, but to those outside everything is shown by parables, so that

[12] *For all their seeing they may not perceive,*
*and for all their hearing they may not understand,*
*lest they turn and be forgiven.'*

¶ 25 [13] And he said to them, You do not know this parable ? then how can you understand all the parables ? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] But those are they along the path where the word is sown, and when they hear it Satan immediately comes and snatches away the word which was sown in them. [16] And likewise those are they who were sown on the rocky soil, who when they have heard the word

immediately receive it with joy [17] and have no root in themselves but are temporary, so that when trouble or persecution comes because of the word they are immediately upset. [18] And others are they who were sown among spiny weeds, these are they who hear the word [19] and the worries of this world and the illusions of money-getting and desires after the other things entering in choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. [20] And those are they who are sown on good soil, who hear the word and receive it and bear fruit thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold.'

¶ 26. [21] And he said to them, 'Does a lamp come to be put under a peck-measure or under the bed? Does it not come to be placed upon its stand?

¶ 27. [22] Nothing is hidden except to be disclosed,
And nothing is concealed except to be revealed.
[23] If any one has ears to hear, let him *hear!*'
[24] And he said to them,
'Take care what you hear.'

¶ 28. The measure you deal out to others shall be dealt to you,—and more too!

¶ 29. [25] For he who has, to him shall be given,
And he who has nothing, from him shall be taken what he has.'

¶ 30. [26] And he said,
'So it is with the Kingdom of God as when a man has scattered seed on the ground, [27] and then night and day alternatively he sleeps and wakes, while the seed sprouts and grows up, he knows not how. [28] The ground itself brings forth—first a blade, then the ear, then the ripe wheat in the ear. [29] But when the crop is ready he at once sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.'

¶ 31. [30] And he said,
'To what can we compare the Kingdom of God? and by what parable can we set it forth?

**[31] It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which when it is sown on the ground is smaller than any of the seeds on the ground, —[32] but once sown it springs up to be larger than any other garden plant and produces branches so large that the wild birds can roost under the shadow of it.'**

¶ 32. **[33] And with many such parables he spoke the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it. [34] He never spoke to them except in parables. But in private he explained everything to his own disciples.**

The first words of this long section suggest a hope which is not fulfilled. The setting is so concrete and characteristic that we are led to expect a story in Mark's best manner, something as concretely historical as the section we have just finished. The return to the seashore is perfectly natural, and there we are pleased to find the boat, which was prepared for another emergency and now proves useful as a pulpit. The teacher's *chair* we ought rather to call it. For Jesus ' sat ' in the boat. According to Jewish custom, that was the proper attitude for the teacher—and so it continued to be in the Church. Hence the significance of the *cathedra* of the bishop or his cathedral, his seat or his see. We have come to expect the orator to stand. Oratory is ' action,' as the Greeks regarded it, and also the Romans. Quite properly, because it aims directly at the emotions. But the professor sits in a chair—at least we speak of a professorial chair, the chair of history, *etc.* And, appropriately, the Christian teacher sat—so long as he was a teacher rather than an orator. Jesus was not a teacher of the systematic sort. There is no indication that he was intent upon *educating* even his twelve disciples. But it is plain too that he was not an orator. He did not harangue the crowds. He proclaimed the Kingdom of God with contagious conviction, but he taught calmly great truths, which he had the art of expressing in the compass of few words. The parable is a calm and reflective method of teaching. But he did not teach ' only by parables.' Mark belies this theory by recording so many of Jesus' terse and direct expressions of the truth, and in particular by all the

sayings which are introduced by *Amen*. That is the sort of teacher Jesus was. He, too, aimed at the emotions, and with more permanent success than most orators; but he sought to move the will indirectly, by implanting truth in the mind—a seed which grows of itself, we know not how. So it was appropriate for Jesus to sit while he imparted such teaching. Nevertheless we find him often teaching on his feet, with characteristic movement and gesture. That was when he was engaged in some sharp dispute. On such occasions nothing could be more trenchant than his argument, which commonly concludes with a solemn and well-defined truth which he might have uttered calmly from his chair. Much of his most precious teaching was thus improvised to meet an unexpected situation. That is the reason why a mere catena of Jesus' sayings, without a hint of the occasion which prompted them, does not do justice to his teaching. It appears that many such lists were made, and that some of them, preserved either in oral or in written tradition, were important sources for all the Synoptic Gospels—even for St. Mark. It is probable that 'Q' was predominantly of this character, though it contained enough narrative to make some of the 'sayings' very vivid.

In this chapter St. Mark does not fulfil the expectation he raises by the very pictorial scenery he describes. The rest of this long section is anything but concrete. To do him justice, the Evangelist warns us what to expect here. In the previous chapter (3[7–12]) he gave a brief and summary account of Jesus' activities as a healer, in this same setting on the shore of the lake. Now he proposes to give a summary account of Jesus' activity as a teacher. In the nature of the case it cannot be so brief, for he has to rehearse the teaching. 'He taught them many things in parables, and in the course of his teaching he said to them.' That expresses clearly enough the intention of giving a *sample* of Jesus' teaching. The Evangelist expressly says that he does not propose to report everything that Jesus said on this occasion or on any one occasion. In such a case he must have felt quite free, I should think, to *select* from a great mass of material at his disposition the sayings (parables chiefly) which he thought most characteristic. All the more

because this is the only place where he tells us what Jesus said when he taught *ex cathedra*. We were disappointed a while ago at being told (1[21]) that Jesus taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, and not told what he said. In the synagogue, as a matter of course, he spoke from the chair (*cp.* Lk 4[20]). He was doubtless teaching from his chair when the paralytic was let down at his feet (2[2]), and again when his family came to get him (3[32]); but again we are disappointed not to learn what he taught. Now we may experience some disillusion at being told. For there is nothing to 'astonish' one in these discourses, as they are here reported—no strong note of 'authority' even (Mk 1[22]), certainly nothing to justify the enthusiastic exclamation of the blind man in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 7[16]): 'Never man spake like this man.' The section as a whole is not coherent. Parables which appear to belong together are separated by sayings of an entirely heterogeneous character. The affirmation that Jesus taught only by means of parables, and the theory that a parable is necessarily obscure and therefore needs interpretation—not to speak of the notion that Jesus used this figurative method of teaching in order that the common people might not understand—all this is contradicted by the rest of St. Mark's Gospel. The interpretation of the parable of the sower, instead of revealing, as it pretends to do, a deeply mysterious truth, turns out to be a superficial reflection upon the various reactions to moral or religious teaching which different people exhibit. *We* like that because it is psychological. We may remark that it is the only psychological comment in the Gospels, unless we can reckon in this category Lk 11[26]. But also the parable itself, in the form it is here given, is prearranged for such an interpretation, being spread out so broadly that its significance as a parable is obscured by a mass of detail. This is a style which has no other example among all Jesus' parables.

Though we may be inclined to admire the psychology displayed in the interpretation of this parable, no one will admire the *style*, if he makes an attempt to translate it. It is the most defective piece of prose in the New Testament. It is defiant not only of good taste but of common sense and of grammar. Both Matthew and Luke

have improved upon it, though it is plain that St. Mark's text was their source. Our most modern translators, not being bound by a dogma of Scriptural inerrancy to furnish a literal translation, have made something quite pretty of it. A translator can hardly resist the temptation to improve upon a text so bad as this. I was led away by that temptation, but afterwards I reformed my translation to make it strictly literal. After all, anyone can understand the meaning, for the parable interprets itself so soon as one has the hint that it needs an interpretation. Obviously, the fundamental difficulty with this passage is the confusion between the seed and the soil on which it falls—the word and people in whose ear it is uttered. Not even Luke has succeeded in overcoming this difficulty—and not even Moffatt. There is no profit in the attempt to translate Mark by finer or more accurate language than he knew how to use. But instead of translating, it might be profitable to paraphrase passages of the Gospel which are obviously badly transmitted. If we might be sure that the saying was properly attributed to Jesus, and if we could make out precisely what he intended to say, and if we possessed consummate skill in handling words . . . so many *ifs*, and the last is not the least important. For we may be sure that what Jesus said was perfectly expressed. How many sayings of his there are to prove it. It is far more wonderful that these have been accurately transmitted than that others were not. For, first of all, they were translated from one language into another, by persons who were not skilful in either ; and then (first or last) they were handed down by oral tradition through a succession of zealous disciples who were not trained to appreciate perfection of form.

There is no reason whatever to suppose that for such a passage as this Mark was dependent upon Peter. He seems to have had here a very inferior source, and perhaps he found in it the theory of parables which agrees so ill with the rest of his Gospel. Nevertheless, we can hardly exonerate St. Mark altogether. His favourite word ' immediately ' occurs three times in the interpretation. It is his fault, at any rate, that the sayings are so incongruously

arranged. Matthew either found a better order or invented it. For after the saying, ' To you has been intrusted the secret,' he puts the congruous one (Mt $13^{12}$), ' Whoever has, to him shall be given more abundantly, *etc* ' ; and after quoting the gloomy words of Isaiah he adds a saying in which we recognize our Master's voice, ' But blessed are your eyes for they see ; and your ears, for they hear. For *amen* say I unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it ; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.' This makes it tolerable to believe that Jesus did in fact quote these words of Isaiah ($6^{9, 10}$), but it suggests also that he did not attach to them the meaning expressed by St. Mark's text, with its garbled quotation.

After the statement that Jesus' message is a secret intentionally hidden from the many, and after St. Mark's sample of esoteric teaching, who does not feel that the parable of the lamp is out of place ? If it means anything, it is an express denial of the foregoing passage. It expresses not only Jesus' confidence that the secret of the Kingdom will ultimately be revealed, but his intention of revealing it so far as is possible. ' *He* ' does not hide the lamp, but sets it up on its stand. The secret of the Kingdom of God is hidden (is a ' mystery ') only in order that it may be revealed —and he is here to reveal it. In this passage there is a trifling detail which gives us assurance that we have here to do with a saying that has been accurately transmitted. ' Does a lamp *come* ? ' No, lamps do not *come*, they are *brought*, or they are *lighted*—as Luke and Matthew very plausibly correct this text. And yet we may be sure that Jesus said *come*. He was thinking of himself, and unconsciously he turned the parable into an allegory. If he had not used this word, who else would have thought of applying to a lamp a term so inappropriate ?

Twice in this section we have the refrain, ' Who has ears to hear, let him hear.' This was evidently characteristic of Jesus. In what connections it was properly used we can best learn from Mt $11^{15}$. There it follows the astonishing disclosure about John the Baptist, ' If you are willing to receive it—*He* is Elijah the Coming One.' That

in itself was amazing. But it was the clue to a greater secret. For if 'the Coming One' (*i.e.* the Forerunner) was already come, then it was time to look for the Christ, and minds that are alert must discover that Jesus is he. 'He who has an ear, let him hear.' This is the phrase Jesus uses as a signal to call people's attention to the fact that there is more here than meets the eye, more than the ear alone can perceive. This signal is in place after the parable of the sower, in case it was meant as an allegory. But in the second occasion of its use it has no obvious pertinence to what comes before or to what follows after—except to its own pendant, 'Take care what you hear.'

'The measure you deal out to others, *etc.*,' both Matthew and Luke record, but in another connection (in the Sermon on the Mount). So we must deal with it as an isolated saying. It is quite capable, in fact, of standing on its own feet. And it is too clear to need an interpretation—except as regards the phrase, 'and more too!' *And then some*, would be a vigorous way of rendering it in our slang. It must be taken to apply not only to good measure but to scant measure. Perhaps we may regard it as a parable. This is what happens in the world: you get tit for tat —and you have no ground for complaint. Why should you complain, if this law holds good also for the Kingdom of God.

The next saying ('He who has, to him shall be given, *etc.*') is more clearly a parable—it gives the gist of the parable of the talents (Mt $25^{14-29}$). It is our impulse to say, This is unfair dealing on God's part. Jesus points out that this is what commonly happens in the world, be it just or unjust. We can detect in it a law of life, which we cannot expect to have changed for the sole advantage of those who are seeking religious values.

I do not find it possible to comment in an orderly manner upon so disorderly a chapter. I am compelled now to return to the interpretation of the parable of the sower. I do not hold like Julicher to a rigid definition of parables which would prejudice me against the notion that Jesus might occasionally give an allegorical interpretation to parables of his which *as parables* have quite a different point. That

is at least more tolerable than to suppose that he uttered an allegory and then interpreted *that*. The double labour is superfluous. A good allegory ought to be its own interpretation. An illustration of this duplication of labour is the so-called parable of the tares (Mt $13^{24-30}$). As a parable it has no point, but as an allegory it is consistently constructed, and its meaning must be obvious enough to any one familiar with the apocalyptic symbol of the ' harvest.' If Jesus had felt the necessity of making it clearer, he could have done that *within* the allegory. It is not credible that he appended to it such an explanation as Matthew gives us ($13^{36-43}$). If that came to Matthew by tradition, it was a tradition of the Sunday school, instruction for babes. The parable of the sower, on the other hand, being first of all a *parable*, and perhaps in its original form not so broadly descriptive of the various fates which befell the seeds, may have prompted Jesus to reflect (psychologically) upon the various reception his teaching encountered. Only it does not seem as if it really reflects *his* experience. There had not yet been time to note the gradual effect of the choking of the seeds by weeds, or even the effect of the scorching sun. So far as we know, his followers had not as yet been subjected to any persecution. And Jesus' experience was not at all like that of Isaiah, for almost everyone was still acclaiming him, which hardly agrees with the parable's purposely exaggerated account of the pitiful loss of seed. Judging from the Gospel story, we would say that Jesus' message encountered two sorts of reception only: there were the few (scribes and Pharisees) who rejected it, and the many who received it gladly. But the parable and its interpretation contemplate only the people who actually received it, giving it at least a momentary welcome, and it divides these people into classes, such as we have no hint of in the Gospel. It cannot escape our observation that these reflections which apply so ill to Jesus' actual experience apply very aptly to the experience of the Church at a later day. That is a strong reason for suspecting that the parable was worked over to make this application telling, and that the interpretation was entirely invented for edification. And this suspicion is strengthened by a small but significant detail. ' The

seed is the *word*,' *i.e.* the Apostolic Gospel. This is the sense in which the term is very generally used in the New Testament, and especially by Luke in the Acts ; but except in Mk $2^{2}$ it is not applied to Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom, so that the interpretation of the parable of the sower would be the only passage where Jesus designates his message as 'the word.' We must recognize moreover that, if this interpretation must be regarded as a reflection of the Church upon the all too common experience of the instability of its members, we must ascribe to the same source the detailed embroidery of the parable which prepared for such an interpretation. Then there is nothing left on which to base the theory that parables are naturally obscure and expressly designed to obscure the truth.

Enough has been said about this theory in the passage where we discussed the notion of parables in general (¶ 13, pp. 128 ff.), on our first encounter with a specimen of this genus. Thereby we are spared the necessity of making a very long comment on this very long section. In view of the diversity of the elements which compose this section it would obviously be an advantage to divide it into smaller parts—if the Evangelist had not made that impossible. He has not woven this passage together into a concordant and convincing whole, like the section we have lately been considering. It might be said that he has tied it together loosely, as with a string. Nevertheless, a mere interpreter cannot ignore this artificial bond. It consists not only in the fact that the Evangelist affirms in his preamble ($4^{2}$) that there is a certain unity in this section, but more particularly in the fact that he expounds, his theory of parables close to the beginning of the section ($4^{11, 12}$) and again at the end of it.

And now we are in a position to consider a *real* bond of unity in this passage, which the Evangelist himself ignored and did his best to obscure. It has already been suggested and made plausible, as I suppose, that the parable of the sower may originally have been briefer and simpler. Also that the matter which St. Mark has placed between this and the two parables of seed growing by itself and the marvellous development of a mustard seed, do not properly belong

there. If there is any plausibility in these suggestions, it must be immensely enhanced by the observation that these three parables are so much alike in their purport that they seem designed to go together.

A preliminary prejudice must be disposed of before we can understand the point of these parables. It will be recognized as soon as it is pointed out, that we have no business to interpret these parables (as we commonly do) by the light of our popular doctrine of evolution. That is not an idea which was current in antiquity. Besides, it is not the mustard plant but the oak which is the symbol of secular development. It may not be so readily perceived that it is not natural development of any sort that is hinted at in these parables. It is hard for us to remember that insight into the process of development from seed to plant is a modern acquisition—as is also understanding of the infinitesimal spores of yeast which so quickly leaven a whole lump of dough. For the ancients, these things were mysteries. Observing the fact that from an insignificant seed there grew a great plant, they would not think of the orderly process of growth governed by natural law, but of the amazing difference between the end and the beginning, the incommensurability of seed and plant.

The parable of the sower, when shorn of its later embellishments, remarks how amazing it is that, in spite of all the seed that is lost in various ways, there is yet a most bountiful harvest—' thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold ! ' If one will only observe that wonder, he will be ready to accept (not to understand !) the mysterious secret of the Kingdom of God —how there comes about ' without observation,' from such small beginnings, so incomparable an effect.

The point of the next parable is at least as plain. It would be hard in fact to derive any other lesson from it. A man strews the seed and then goes about from day to day attending to other business, while the seed sprouts and grows up in a manner perfectly mysterious to him and entirely independent of his effort (for the ground itself is feracious), the blade first showing itself, and then the ear— and before you know it the harvest is ripe !

In the parable of the mustard seed there is no faintest

suggestion of a slow process of growth. This is a plant which, in an incredibly short season, grows to a size utterly incommensurable with its minute seed.

The parable of the leaven is precisely to the same effect. It is recorded in this connection by both Matthew (13[33]) and Luke (13[20, 21]), and presumably was one of the 'many parables' which Mark found in his source and discarded (Mk 4[33]).

There are no other four parables in all our Gospels which so closely agree upon one point. These familiar facts to which Jesus calls attention are to be regarded as signals pointing to the great secret of the Kingdom of God. There *was* therefore a profound mystery in what Jesus said—only it was not a mystery to be explained or 'interpreted,' but only to be heeded. 'Who has ears to hear, let him *hear*!' The disciples of a later day, not apprehending what the real mystery was, invented another.

There is one inconspicuous detail in the parable of the growing seed which deserves attention. 'He at once *sends forth* the sickle, because the harvest is come.' The 'harvest' is so natural a sequence at the end of this parable that it does not compel us to think of the apocalyptic picture of the end of the world. But 'send forth' the sickle is so unnatural an expression that it ought to arrest our attention. Our English versions all suppress this anomaly in favour of some more natural phrase. But 'send forth' is the Septuagint rendering of Joel 3 (4)[13]—and that suffices to connect this parable with the apocalyptic picture of the end of the world (Rev. 14[14–20]). It is the familiar case of Jesus' allegorical reflection upon the figures of his parables. The *he* who sends forth the sickle is no longer the peasant farmer, but God or the Messiah.

The amazing thing is that this is the only vestige St. Mark has left of the original apocalyptic colouring of these parables of the Kingdom. We must suppose that he found this phrase in his source and left it standing only because he failed to notice its significance. His interpretation of the parable of the sower shows how thoroughly he was disposed to eliminate apocalyptic eschatology. That seems all the more remarkable when we compare his

interpretation with the thoroughly apocalyptic interpretation St. Matthew gives of the parable of the tares (Mt $13^{36-43}$): 'He that soweth is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed are the sons of the Kingdom, the tares are the sons of the Evil One, and he that sowed them is the Devil, the harvest is the end of the world, the reapers are the angels. As the tares are burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather, *etc.*' It is not likely that this interpretation is to be attributed to Jesus any more than the other. But the parable itself (Mt $13^{24-30}$) concludes with a saying which is more clearly apocalyptic than the conclusion of the parable of the sower: 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.' We have reason to be surprised. Mark is accounted the most eschatological of our Gospels, yet here where we find this Evangelist at work independently he seems to be bent upon eliminating every apocalyptic trait (and even a whole parable) which even St. Matthew preserves. One can say, '*even* St. Matthew,' for it is clear that this Evangelist (whoever he was) had no interest in these things. At any rate, the time had passed for inventing a picture of the Last Things. We see how St. Paul, while holding fast to the eschatological hope, had eliminated the apocalyptic details of the picture. Now we discover that St. Mark, though he preserves in his Gospel so many hints of Jesus' eschatological outlook, did not personally relish apocalyptic imagery, and certainly would not invent it. The apocalyptic interest was dying out in the Church and (in spite of the Revelation of St. John, which represented a singular tendency) evidently belongs to a stratum far anterior to the composition of St. Mark's Gospel—if we can properly use the word 'far' with reference to any point within the twenty-five years which had elapsed since the Lord's death. That twenty-five years must have been crowded with movement and experience—a time of rapid *development*, as we would say. It is not strange, then, that even the Synoptic Gospels have obscured the eschatological outlook of Jesus.

They were already influenced by the tendency which is clearly manifested in the Fourth Gospel by the elimination of the key word of eschatology, the Kingdom of God. We may rather be amazed that so many clear hints are preserved in the Synoptic Gospels of Jesus' characteristic point of view—in spite of the Evangelists. This is proof of the fact that Jesus' words have been in the main well preserved. For it is exclusively in the words ascribed to Jesus we can detect his eschatological orientation.

## Section 5. ¶¶ 33-39

## JOURNEYS

### Mk 4$^{35}$—6$^{13}$

### ¶ 33. The Storm on the Lake.

Mk 4$^{35-41}$. **And the same day when evening was come he said to them, 'Let us cross to the other side.' 36 So, dismissing the crowd, they took him just as he was in the boat, and there were other boats with him. 37 And there came up a violent squall of wind, and the waves dashed into the boat so that the boat was already filled. 38 But he was in the stern sleeping on the cushion. 39 And they woke him, saying, 'Teacher, do you not care if we drown?' 40 And he arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Be quiet! Shut your mouth!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said to them, 'Why are you so timid? Have you no faith yet?' 41 And they were very much afraid and said to each other, 'Who can he be, when even the wind and the sea obey him?'**

Another topical section begins here. Travel is its theme. At least the impression of movement is what differentiates this section from the sections immediately preceding it. The section we have just been studying was devoted exclusively to parables, as a characteristic form of teaching. Before that came a succession of conflicts, in which we discovered a chronological order conflicting in some measure with the topical arrangement. The first chapter (verses 14–15) wove together, as in an overture, the themes

which were to be developed later: teaching, calling of disciples, healing the sick, casting out demons, and travel.

This, I believe, is a fair account of the Evangelist's method of telling his story. It is clear at least that he was not writing without plan and method; and if the topical arrangement is not consistently carried out, that is evidently due to the claims of chronological sequence, the necessity of getting on with the story. I conceive that in putting this travel section last he *is* getting on with the story. We do not need to suppose that every incident related here occurred in this sequence. We have already remarked that the visit to Nazareth must be placed earlier, as St. Luke thought. But it seems reasonable to ascribe his determination to leave Capernaum to his last bitter experience there (the charge that he was 'out of his mind' and that he 'had Beelzebul'), which initiated a series of brief journeys in the neighbourhood; and to discover in Herod's dangerous interest in him ($6^{14-16}$) a reason for leaving Galilee altogether. Because these brief journeys in Galilee immediately preceded the definite departure from Galilee and the long wandering in pagan lands, the division between the two (which is one of the chief divisions of the Gospel) has been rendered vague, and the situation is still further obscured by the inexplicable duplication of the feeding of the multitude.

'The same day,' we need take no more seriously, perhaps, than Matthew and Luke do. 'It happened on one of these days' says St. Luke ($8^{22}$), that he boarded the boat.' When St. Mark says of the disciples that they 'took him in the boat,' the implication seems to be that he was previously on the shore, and 'just as he was' may have been added to make plausible the account that the sudden determination to go to the other side was made on the evening of that 'same day' when he sat in the boat teaching. So Wellhausen suggests. But Mark has succeeded in making the story *so* plausible that I see no reason for trying to better it. It was not the first time Jesus chose to spend the night under the stars, instead of going back to Capernaum, after a fatiguing day spent with the crowd on the seashore. One night at least he had spent on the mountain in prayer. He needed to be alone, as he could not be in the house. In

the boat he was at least as comfortable as on the hillside, and as much alone—as we see in the sequel, for he slept after the fatigues of the day. A strong man, inured to toil, he needed no more comfort than was furnished by ' *the* cushion ' which, it appears, was an ordinary appurtenance of a fishing boat. (Or was it the cushion that was given him to sit on while he taught ?) ' They took him in the boat just as he was,' does not seem to me to mean that they took him *into* the boat. The disciples did actually *take* him : he was a passenger, and the disciples rowed. It is not necessary or even plausible to suppose that all of the Twelve were with him on this short trip. The four fishermen who were his first disciples were the only ones who could have been of use to him on such an occasion : the others would have been an encumbrance. The statement that ' there were other boats with him ' has no sequel in the story as it is here told, and seems therefore to be a vestige of an early tradition.

' There came a violent squall of wind, and the waves dashed into the boat so that it already filled '—and still Jesus slept. High on the stern he was not soaked by the water. The disciples woke him by saying, ' Teacher, do you not care if we drown ? ' That is irony—a figure of speech commonly used by children and simple souls to express querulous complaint. ' Teacher ' (*didaskale*) is the word St. Mark uses here : St. Luke has ' Master ' (*epistata*), St. Matthew ' Lord ' (*kurie*)—doubtless all of them used to render the Hebrew term *rabbi*. Our familiar English versions use the word ' master.' It is important to note that in the Gospels this word means *rabbi*, and nothing else. By this title Jesus was addressed by his disciples, and by others who chose to be polite to him. Very naturally . . . in the days of his flesh. But naturally he was not spoken of (or to) by this title after the Resurrection. That is an anachronism no one would be tempted to fall into. In the early Church Jesus was known as the Lord (*kurios*), and that was then used as a title of religious reverence. It was very natural that this familiar title should be applied to Jesus in the Greek Gospels ; and it could be used there without manifest impropriety, inasmuch as in its secular meaning it was equivalent to Sir or Master. The Evangelists

were doubtless grateful for this ambiguity; but that they did not expressly use it as a religious (not to say divine) title is made plain by the fact that they all of them except Luke (and John most of all) use the title *rabbi*, frequently translating it (as Luke also does) by 'teacher.' Only Mark is perfectly consistent in excluding the use of Lord as a title of Jesus in the days of his flesh. In $7^{28}$ a pagan woman addresses him as Lord, but in her mouth that has merely the significance of Sir.

In view of these facts, what must we say of the modern American and English custom of speaking about Jesus Christ as 'the Master'? The custom is now so universal among Protestants that hardly anyone is aware how modern it is or how provincial. It has grown up in a generation. It finds no more justification in the formulas of the Protestant Reformation than in the documents of the early Church. We take it from the Gospels, to be sure; but there it is used with a sense of historical perspective which gives no sanction to our use of such a title for the exalted Christ, the Lord of glory. It is certain that we would not use it, if we had clearly in mind the fact that Master means simply *Rabbi*. We would not wish to speak of Jesus Christ merely as the Teacher. The wide currency of this title would not be possible except for the fact that master is an ambiguous word: to us it means rather a ruler than a teacher. But that is what it does *not* mean in the Gospels. And even in this higher meaning (which still has no religious implications) is this title high enough for Jesus Christ? Is it tolerable that it should be allowed to displace the glorious titles of Lord and Saviour? This use is now so nearly universal with us that it cannot be meant as a repudiation of Christianity, though it appears to be no less than that. But perhaps because of its ambiguity it is popular with us who prefer to be vague Christians, not denying that Jesus is Lord, and not confessing it. I would say that because of its ambiguity it is a hateful and dangerous title. I should prefer to say Teacher; and instead of the distant and impersonal title 'the Teacher' ('the Master'), I would say '*my* Teacher,' confessing myself his disciple (a *bhakti* of Jesus, as the Indians would say), bound to do what he

enjoins, because I recognize, as the liberal phrase puts it, that Christianity is not first of all a dogma but a way of life. It is true that Jesus as a teacher taught us chiefly what we must *do* to be saved. So much as this I feel compelled to say when we encounter the word 'teacher' (*didaskalos*) for the first time in St. Mark's Gospel.

'And he arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Be quiet! Shut your mouth! And the wind fell, and there was a great calm.' Jesus spoke to the wind as he would to an evil spirit, *rebuking* it. Wind (*anemos*) was mythologically regarded as a spirit (*pneuma*). 'Shut your mouth' is appropriate to the wind as it was represented in mythological pictures—a head with distended cheeks puffing prodigiously. Codex D is essentially right in omitting 'the sea,' for it was not to the sea that Jesus spoke in such terms; but doubtless the original text of Mark had this phrase, for it appears in the best authorities, is repeated by Matthew and Luke, and at the end of this paragraph it is said that 'even the wind and the sea obey him.' This, to fishermen, must have seemed the greatest miracle Jesus had performed, and it is not strange that they were then overawed by him as they never had been before.

'Why are you so timid?' said Jesus. 'Have you no faith *yet*?' The fear which is expressed by the word 'timid' (*deilos*) is the kind of fear that does nobody any good. It is the kind that apprehends danger where none exists, which always expects to encounter 'a lion in the way,' and which, when real danger threatens, robs us not only of our reason, but of strength to fight or flee. It is the sort of fear which renders our life futile and miserable. The aim of the Christian mission to pagan lands is finely described as 'teaching men not to be afraid in the dark.' But this kind of fear is so common among *us* that no sort of therapy is so necessary as 'The Conquest of Fear.' Over against this kind of fear Jesus places 'faith' as its polar opposite. Faith, in this sense, is not specifically Christian. It is the quality of courage—such courage, namely, as is prompted by trust in God. But if this is not specifically the character of Christian faith, it is nevertheless fundamental to it, and it is a quality of character which Jesus was

always inculcating, both by precept and example. Hence he says here, You have been so long with me, and 'yet' you have no faith? 'Is not God upon the water, just as well as on the land?'

By this contrast with timid fear we can learn what faith is. This is a case where psychology is not useless. It teaches us that faith coheres naturally and necessarily with a range of human qualities which we may call positive. Courage, faith, hope, love are the outstanding terms of this series. The opposite terms—fear, distrust, despair, and hate—exclude not only their immediate contraries, but every other term of the contrasted series; for within each series there is solidarity between all the terms, and as a whole each series is opposed to the other. We see then that faith, hope, and love are not arbitrarily associated by Jesus (and Paul), and also that Jesus is effectively recommending these qualities when he reprobates any of the opposite series. We do not commonly apprehend how emphatically Jesus recommends courage to his disciples. If in any way he sought to 'train' his Apostles, it was in the practice of courage. He knew they would have need of it, and he doubted if they would be brave enough to meet the tests they were likely to encounter ($14^{38}$). This is obscured from us so long as we do not understand that courage is implicit in trustful faith. We may also fail to observe that Jesus was recommending courage whenever he condemned fear. But his intention becomes very clear when all the exhortations to this effect are combined, as they are in the twelfth chapter of St. Luke. 'Be not anxious how or what you shall answer' your adversaries; 'Be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat; nor for your body, what you shall put on.' These are all petty fears, but being the most common, they are the most devastating. Bertrand Russell expresses well the Christian perception: 'It is preoccupation with possessions more than anything else that prevents man from living freely and nobly.' But Jesus had also in mind the fear which we count the most fearful: 'I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them which kill the body—but after that can do no more.'

Fine exhortations! but they are of no help to us,

unless somebody will show us the way to attain such qualities. The mere will to be brave does not help us. The will-to-believe really gets us somewhere. William James was quite right in affirming that. Like the White Queen in *Alice*, 'I can shut my eyes and believe fifty impossible things in a minute.' The will-to-believe gets us as far as *belief*, but no amount of sheer willing can bring us one inch nearer to courage or to faith. A more modern psychologist than James has something more profound to say about the will, revealing its impotence in such a case as this. 'When the will and the imagination are pitted against one another, it is the imagination that always wins.' In that sentence is concentrated by Baudouin the whole philosophy of Emile Coué's practice as a healer. It is pertinent to the cure of fear, for that, more than any other ill, is a function of the imagination. I do not mean to say unfounded imaginings: the danger which threaten may be very real, but it can affect us only through the imagination. Our fear may be reasonable, and still we may wish to overcome it. We are wisely warned that this cannot be done except by indirections, that is, by casting down the imaginations which breed fears. Jesus teaches us how. Love, says someone, gives value to persons and things. It sets goals before us which, if they seem worthy, inspire us with courage to pursue them. (I feel sure I am quoting from someone, but I do not know from whom. These words seem profound enough for Hocking to utter—but perhaps it was not from him I got them.) The goal Jesus sets before us is the Kingdom of God, and he conceives that this must prompt in us the highest courage, the readiness to endure all suffering and to make all sacrifices. But he also imparts to us the specific cure for fears. We ought not to be surprised if it is paradoxical. He proposes to cast out all petty and ignoble fears by the one great and only noble fear, the fear of God. Courage is an art which consists in knowing what we ought to fear and what not to fear. 'I will show you,' said Jesus, 'whom you ought to fear: fear him who after he has killed has power to cast you into Gehenna. Yea, I say unto you, fear him.' We are absurd when we ignore the fact (or deny it) that the pains of hell are calculated to

affect the imagination profoundly, and that they may prompt salutary fears which impart courage in the face of temptation. But the idea which makes the most powerful appeal to the imagination is the idea of God. And the fear of God which Jesus inculcated was not terror but trust. He used the language of the Old Testament where 'the fear of God' is the closest analogue we can find to the word 'faith' which is so prominent in the New. Therefore he proceeds to inculcate this trustful fear—or should we call it a fearful trust? 'Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered!' How marvellous is God! And yet you cannot think of God without implying such things. He is a mystery at once *tremendum* and *fascinans* (to use Otto's terminology). The conclusion is, 'Fear not.' There is nothing but the fear of God that can make us truly courageous—not only against dangers, but against temptations.

For a long time I have wanted to write a book about 'Casting Out Fear.' I have not only this title ready, but a great mass of material, most of it psychological. But I have not been able to overcome my own fear that the great public of my generation would not tolerate a prescription for the cure of fear which leaves one fear still standing. For they are determined not to fear God—that least of all. So they are condemned to remain slaves to their innumerable little fears, till they develop into phobias or even deeper psychical derangements. It may be possible even now for some men to fear God—but not for religious people. Their preachers all unite in persuading them that this is (in spite of Jesus) an unchristian attitude. It is a long while since Dr. Holmes made his witty distinction between two sorts of Christianity which then could boast of being modern: 'The Unitarian thinks he is too good to be damned; the Universalist thinks God is too good to damn him.' That characterization is not antiquated—except as a distinction. It no longer distinguishes a Unitarian from a Universalist—or from any other sort of modern Christian. And the jibe which Heine uttered from his 'mattress grave' will not soon be antiquated. Does he not fear God? 'Oh, God'll

forgive me, *c'est son métier*—that's what he's for.' Heine could deride this attitude towards God; but after all it was his own attitude, the attitude of the advanced men of his time—and of all the men of our time. Benedetto Croce not long ago (when Freemasons were still to be found in Italy and were regnant there) defined 'Masonic mentality' as 'a disposition to skim triumphantly over all the harder and deeper problems of life.' It would be absurd to say such a thing in England or America—if only for the reason that it does not distinguish Masons from any other elements in our population. That 'mentality' is now nearly universal. It is a miserable vestige of the old-time Rationalism, which is so much decried nowadays, but was in one respect really great. For all its shallowness, it included the noble faith (which no one entertains now) that what is right is practical, and what is true must in the end prevail. Why say that here? Because with the prevailing 'mentality' which is the residual vestige of Rationalism it is vain to approach the Gospel.

But perhaps people may still be willing to listen to Plato, if they think that Jesus was not philosophical enough—or that he was too paradoxical. Plato also taught that fear may be conquered by fear. I quote from the first book of *Laws*, using Jowett's translation, except for one phrase where that great scholar made a slip, but suppressing the replies of Cleinias the Cretan, which give an appearance of dialogue to what is in reality only a sermon by 'the Athenian.' 'But how ought we to define courage? Is that to be regarded only as a combat against fears and pains, or also against desires and pleasures, and against flatteries; which exercise such a tremendous power that they make the hearts even of respectable citizens to melt like wax? And do we not distinguish two kinds of fear which are all but opposites? There is the fear of expected evil; and there is the fear of an evil reputation—we are afraid of being thought evil, because we do or say some dishonourable thing, which fear we and all men term shame. These are the two fears, as I have called them; one of which is the opposite of pain and of other fears, while the other is the opposite of the greatest and most numerous sort of pleasures.

And does not the legislator and every one who is good for anything hold this fear in the greatest honour? This is what he terms reverence, and the confidence which is the reverse of this he terms insolence; and the latter he always deems to be a very great evil both to individuals and to states. Does not this nobler sort of fear preserve us in many important ways? And is there any single thing which equally gives victory and safety in war? For there are two things which give victory: confidence before enemies, and fear of disgrace before friends. Then each of us should be fearless and also fearful, and what we ought or ought not to fear has been determined.'

This philosophy seems flat when we compare it with Jesus' way of determining what we ought and what we ought not to fear. Nevertheless it may serve to lead us up to the bolder paradox. Only in religion do we encounter *real* paradox—and we encounter it in all notable religions. To Lao-tsze has been ascribed (I do not know with how much reason) this motto for religious discipleship: 'To tread the impassable way, to think the unthinkable thought, to say the ineffable word, and to do the impossible deed.' I like better the way a revered doctor of the Zen school of Buddhism expressed the paradoxical nature of religion. This doctrine, he said, is in the throat of the disciple like a red-hot ball of ice—he cannot get it down, and he cannot cough it up. Our modern liberals with 'the Masonic mentality' would say that it was *cool*, if they did not prefer to say that it was *warm*, or with a perfectly balanced mind they might affirm that it was *lukewarm*. That does not come to even so much as a half-truth. But that is the way we 'interpret' that red-hot ball of ice which is the Gospel.

And now, with this preparation, we may approach the greater paradox of this 'simple' story of the storm on the lake. I am more interested in *that* than in the question how the storm was made to cease. The disciples were no sooner relieved of their fear of the storm than they fell into a much greater fear. 'They were afraid with a great fear,' says the Evangelist in his Aramaic idiom. This time they were afraid of Jesus—and for this fear they were not rebuked! If anything can be more absurd than the fear of God, it is

the notion that Jesus was a person to be feared. We will not allow that even the Christ is to be feared. The Pantocrator, that most worthy Judge eternal, has no place in *our* Christian art, and we have few pictures which represent Jesus as an awe-inspiring figure. And yet it is clearly and indelibly recorded in the Gospels (and in all of them) that Jesus was feared by his disciples. St. Luke represents that fear was the first impression Peter had of Jesus. 'He fell down at Jesus' knees (Jesus being *seated* in the boat) and cried, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man"' (Lk 5[8]). The procuring of an immense catch of fish seems not more apt than other miracles of Jesus to awaken religious awe, but perhaps it was more likely to impress fishermen—as was also the stilling of the storm. Peter had the same experience as Isaiah (6[5]) had when he saw Jahve in the Temple. And there was another famous storm (Mk 6[45–51]; Mt 14[22–33]; Jn 6[16–21]) when Jesus was seen walking on the water, seeming to ignore the Apostles as they struggled at the oars—and they thought it was a ghost and shrieked aloud, for they all saw him and were terrified. Then he spoke to them at once: 'Courage!' he said, 'it is I; have no fear.' The sequel which Matthew reports is at least in one respect unhistorical. 'Certainly you are the Son of God' represents a perception the Apostles did not have before the Transfiguration. And even that title did not mean more than Messiah. We must get it out of our heads that the disciples ever imagined Jesus might be God while they companied with him in the days of his flesh. In spite of the awe which he inspired, their relation to him was social, not religious. The religious faculty is responsive properly only to the unseen, the invisible. Nevertheless the feeling prompted in the disciples was a religious feeling, the very stuff out of which all religion is made, *i.e.* a sense of the *numinous*. At first it was nothing more sublime than the 'panic' fear which the Greeks knew and named—a fear which might well be prompted by such a portent as the sudden ceasing of the storm when Jesus rebuked it. 'Who can he be?' they said—and they knew no answer. The other story of a storm was similar to this. Similar enough at least to suggest to Luke that it was only

another version of the same occurrence, and had therefore better be omitted. You may protest that this story is different from the earlier one in every detail. And you are right: in every *detail* it is different; but it is alike in the one essential point that the disciples had a numinous experience of Jesus. They thought they saw his ghost and shrieked aloud. Their skin crept, hair stood on end, and their knees shook—by all these physical signs the fear of the supernatural is so sharply distinguished from other fears that it ought to have a different name. That is a fear which is prompted not by physical danger, but by the weird, the eerie, the uncanny. Such was the experience the Three had at the Transfiguration (Mk $9^{6}$). 'They did not know what to say, they were so terrified.' But their vague presentiment was then clarified by a revelation: 'This is my Son, my Beloved, listen to him.' After that, though they were constantly in the company of Jesus and still called him 'Teacher,' they felt a new shyness in his presence and were afraid to ask him questions ($10^{32}$). As he marched before them to Jerusalem, 'those that followed after were afraid.' This is the same numinous fear, but sublimated now by an apprehension of Jesus' majesty, by a presentiment of the eternal order in the temporal. He had disclosed to them his purpose to give his life a ransom for many, and in this lonely resolution they detected, more clearly than in any of his miracles, 'the finger of God, the flash of the will that can.' The last word of this Gospel is numinous fear. An empty tomb! How uncanny! The women 'fled out of the tomb, for they were seized with terror and beside themselves. They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.'

At the conclusion of this story of the tempest, where the Apostles' fear of Jesus is first disclosed, I have paused to follow the clue to the end. It must be evident, I should think, that one who approaches the Gospels with the presumption that it is ridiculous to fear Jesus had better not open the book.

¶ 34. The Demoniac of Gerasa.

Mk $5^{1-20}$. **And they reached the other side of the sea in the country of the Gerasenes. [2] And as soon as he stepped out of the boat there approached him from the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, [3] who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no one could any longer bind him, even with a chain, [4] because many times he had been bound with fetters and chains and had snapped the chains and broken the fetters, and no one could tame him. [5] And night and day, among the tombs and the hills, he shrieked and cut himself with stones. [6] And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt before him, [7] exclaiming in a loud voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.' [8] (For he had said to him, 'Let the unclean spirit come out of the man.') [9] And he asked him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'My name is legion, for there are many of us.' [10] And he begged him earnestly not to send him out of the country. [11] Now there was a great herd of swine feeding on the hillside. [12] And the spirits besought him, saying, 'Send us into the swine so that we may enter into them.' [13] And he gave them leave. And the unclean spirits leaving the man, entered into the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep slope into the sea (about two thousand of them) and were drowned in the sea. [14] And the swineherds fled and reported it in the town and the villages. And the people came to see what had happened. [15] And they came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting clothed and in his sober senses—the very man who had been possessed by the legion—and they were afraid. [16] And the eyewitnesses related what had happened to the possessed man and to the swine. [17] And they began to beg him to go away from their district. [18] And as he was stepping into the boat the man who had been possessed begged that he might stay with him. [19] And he did not permit it, but said to him, 'Go home to your own people and report to them what the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.' [20] And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him, and everybody was astonished.**

No lack of liveliness in this story! It is told in St. Mark's best manner. And yet it is not convincing. It is

repeated by the three Evangelists in substantially the same form, therefore by external authority it is as well supported as any other passage in the Gospels ; its authenticity cannot be impugned either by textual or by literary criticism, and yet . . . we cannot believe that the story is true, and would not if we could. Beyond the ' higher criticism ' there is a still higher. When precise canons of criticism fail, we have to rely upon *tact*. By the *feel* of this passage the suspicion is prompted that the texture is not genuine. And we can give due weight to that suspicion, now that we are relieved of the incubus of the grim alternative which required us to accept the Holy Scriptures *en bloc* or reject them as a whole. Incredibly remote seem the days of my youth when Gladstone and Huxley were waging their runcible battle about the ' question of the pigs.' We did not then regard it as melodrama, for there was nothing less at stake than ' The Impregnable Rock of the Holy Scriptures.' If the ' pigs ' had to be given up, most of the Christians in England and America were ready to exclaim, ' What have we left ? ' *Now*, our only concern is the question, how such a prank came to be attributed to Jesus. The story must have been popular before St. Mark adopted and, perhaps, embellished it. This does not disconcert us so much as the fact that three such sober Evangelists accepted it. Other Gospels which were not accepted by the Church ascribed similar and more malevolent pranks to the infant Jesus. But our Canonical Gospels furnish only one other instance of the sort of miracle the vulgar wonder-workers like to perform, or the story-tellers liked to ascribe to them. That, of course, was the *stater* found in the mouth of a fish (Mt $17^{24-27}$). Among all wonder-workers (not excluding Elijah) Jesus is distinguished by the fact that he did not perform his wonders to provoke wonder, nor to get himself out of a fix, but only to do good to people. One of the things that surprises us in this story is the statement that Jesus exhorted the demoniac to tell how he was cured. He usually enjoined his patients to tell nobody, and it is not obvious why he should do differently in a pagan land.

It is by no means the pigs alone that provoke our incredulity. Our difficulties begin with the name of the

place. Gerasa is too far from the lake, and when Matthew calls it Gadara he does not bring it near enough. Gergesa is the suggestion of one ancient text—and a very good scene for such a story, since no such place seems ever to have existed. Moreover, geographers are puzzled to find the cliff down which, once upon a time when pigs were swine, the whole herd rushed violently down into the sea. Archaeologists have failed to discover the rock-hewn tombs in which the demoniac lived. The fierce and untamable strength of the demoniac is unexampled and evidently exaggerated. And even St. Matthew stumbles when he comes to the prodigious number of demons that possessed this one man. The Roman legion numbered four or five thousand. To preserve a plurality of demons he invented a pair of demoniacs, but as they presumably contained only one demon each, that does not seem sufficient for two thousand swine. The one thing you cannot do with a spirit is to divide it. It is the absolute atom.

But all the Evangelists agree about the pigs—that evidently was the attraction of the story. We all know that the Jews were prejudiced against the pig. The pig was ceremonially ' unclean,' *i.e. tabu*. But we can hardly understand how deep a physical disgust may be prompted by such a *tabu*. The authentic story of an Australian savage may enlighten us. A man in whose tribe a husband's possessions were *tabu* to the wife discovered that his wife was accidentally sleeping under his blanket—and the horror of such great ' uncleanness ' smote him dead. If the Jew's repulsion to swine did not go so far as that, it evidently disposed him to take delight in any misfortune that might befall this abhorrent animal. This story is evidently related with great gusto—by Christian Jews. We can imagine that it may have seemed to them the most beautiful story in the Gospel, and that the glamour of it blinded the critical faculties even of our Evangelists. How appropriate that these unclean spirits should enter these unclean beasts—and that not only the swine were drowned, but the spirits, to their great chagrin, were carried to the very place (' the abyss,' Lk 8[31]) they expected to escape by entering into the swine.

For all this, I am very far from affirming that there is no truth at all in the story. It fits plausibly into St. Mark's narrative. Jesus would likely land somewhere after a stormy night on the lake, and he might well have met a demoniac when he stepped on shore. The hostility of the Gerasenes was not needed to drive him away, for his impromptu departure from Capernaum implied a short absence, and in fact the people were expecting him when he returned there next day. But as it is impossible to discriminate in such a story between what is true and what is false, we cannot use it to illustrate the character of Jesus. Therefore I did not cite this instance when I was speaking of the numinous fear of Jesus. Besides, the fear of these people was only the sort a malignant magician might inspire.

Yet this story is interesting even if it isn't true. It illustrates only too searchingly the character of the Evangelists—and the uncritical character of their Gospels. We cannot henceforth accept anything they tell us *merely because they say it.*

¶¶ 35, 36, 37. JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.

¶ 35. Mk 5[21–43]. **And when Jesus crossed in the boat back again to the other side a large crowd was gathered to meet him, and he was on the seashore. [22] And there came one of the synagogue presidents whose name was Jairus, and when he saw him he fell at his feet [23] with the earnest petition, 'My little daughter is at the point of death, so please come and lay your hands on her that she may recover and live.' [24] And Jesus went along with him.**

¶ 36. **And a great crowd followed and pressed round him. [25] And a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years [26] and had suffered much at the hands of many physicians and had spent all her fortune and was none the better for it but rather grew worse—[27] having heard about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind him and touched his cloak. [28] For she said, 'If I can just touch his cloak, I shall get well.' [29] And at once the hemorrhage stopped, and she felt in her body that she was cured of her scourge. [30] And Jesus was at once conscious of a healing power going out of him, so he turned**

**around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my cloak?' [31] And his disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd presses round you, and you say, 'Who touched me?' [32] But he kept looking around to see who had done it. [33] And the woman, in fear and trembling (for she knew what had happened to her), advanced and threw herself down before him and told him the whole truth. [34] But he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your scourge.'**

¶ 37. **[35] While he was speaking to the woman people came from the president's house, saying, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' [36] But Jesus overheard the report and said to the synagogue president, 'Have no fear, only have faith.' [37] And he allowed no one to accompany him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. [38] So they came to the president's house, where he beheld a tumult of people wailing and making loud lament. [39] And as he entered he said to them, 'Why make tumult and wailing? The child is not dead, but asleep.' [40] And they laughed at him. But he put them all out and took with him only the father and mother of the child and his companions as he went in where the child was lying. [41] And taking hold of the child's hand he said to her, '*Talitha koum*,' —that means, 'Little girl, I tell you to rise.' [42] And the girl got up at once and began to walk about (for she was twelve years old). And they were at once exceedingly amazed. [43] And he strictly enjoined them not to let anyone know of this, and he said they should give her something to eat.**

Though the Evangelist does not here mention the name of Capernaum, he means us to understand that it was there Jesus landed when he returned from his short excursion across the lake. The scene is the same that we have been made familiar with: 'he was on the seashore,' and a large crowd was gathered to meet him there. The lake (though it is called a 'sea' in our Gospels, except by St. Luke) is not so big but that the people could see the boat as it started from the other side, and the frantic father of the sick girl had ample warning of Jesus' coming, so that he could be on the beach to meet him when he landed. This

man was ' one of the synagogue presidents.' Ordinarily the oversight of worship in each synagogue was entrusted to a single person, the *archisynagogos*, but it appears from Acts $13^{15}$ that this office was occasionally vested in a committee, and such may have been the case in Capernaum. It is more probable, however, that the Evangelist meant to say that this man Jairus belonged to a class of dignitaries which was generally hostile to Jesus. Jairus, if he was not himself a scribe, must have been in sympathy with the pharisaical party, and by this time Jesus' rupture with the Synagogue seems to have been complete. But this man was brought to Jesus' feet by his great need. Literally, to his feet, for, in spite of his importance, he prostrated himself before him, begging him in the politest terms to come and lay his hands on his little daughter so that she might recover and live. He may have been scandalized at Jesus' moral teaching, but he had no doubt that he was able to heal the sick, even if they were at the point of death. Matthew represents that she was already dead ($8^{18}$), but that is the sort of exaggeration all miracles suffer from. It seems to me marvellous enough that when Jesus heard that the child was at the point of death he had no hesitancy whatever about risking his reputation by attempting her cure. St. Mark says simply that ' Jesus went along with him.' That is the sort of courage which Jesus called faith. His native hue of resolution was not ' sicklied o'er with a pale cast of thought.' He did not go to attempt the cure of the child—he went to cure her. Jesus' faith is amazing to me. And it is not to be accounted for by an unbroken series of successful cures. We are not obliged to suppose that even in Capernaum he had no failures, and the next paragraph recounts his ill-success at Nazareth—which really belongs before this time. There is a saying of Jesus' (Mt $12^{43-45}$ ; Lk $11^{24-26}$) which seems to be a reflection upon the instability of some of his cures of demoniacs, and we are not obliged to suppose that all of his other cures were permanent. And yet, Jesus was not flustered by the challenging petition of this important personage, but went with him at once to heal a dying girl. I do not understand him. Such a man is not to be measured by our average

psychology. I can understand, on the other hand, why the crowd all went with him.

It appears that in the crowd waiting for Jesus on the beach there was a woman who sought healing for a malady which she would blush to confess to a man and could not divulge before a crowd. If she had been living in Capernaum, she surely would have sought earlier to be healed of her complaint, which had vexed her already for twelve years, and for which she had in vain sought relief by appealing to many physicians (St. Luke, being himself a physician, softens St. Mark's disparagement of his profession, $8^{43}$). The phrase, 'having heard about Jesus,' clearly enough describes her as an outsider. So we are free to suppose that she came from Caesarea Philippi, where Eusebius (*H.E.* vii. 18) professes to have seen the monument she erected in memory of her cure. It was a statue representing Jesus standing upright and herself kneeling at his feet. It is not easy to accept this statement, and it is no easier to reject it. It has been suggested that what Eusebius saw was a representation of an emperor with a province, symbolized by a woman, prostrated before him. But that was a conventional *motif* which no citizen of the Empire could confound with a statue of Jesus. Later tradition named this woman Veronica—doubtless because this true image of Christ was ascribed to her. But it was not St. Mark's habit to mention the names of the secondary characters in the history of Jesus. Strangely enough, he does not tell us the name of the woman whose beautiful deed was to be held in remembrance wherever the Gospel should be preached ($14^{9}$). Neither does he tell the name of 'a certain young man' who fled naked from the garden of Gethsemane—though this young man may have been himself. It is surprising therefore that he gives us the name of Jairus (a Latinized form of Jair). He was, to be sure, one of the most important people that Jesus had contact with in Galilee; but that was hardly reason enough for mentioning his name, when the centurion whose servant was healed at Capernaum was not named by Matthew ($8^{5-13}$) or Luke ($7^{1-10}$). It is more plausible to suppose that the daughter of Jairus was well known in the Church

at the time this Gospel was written, as were Alexander and Rufus, whose father Simon carried Jesus' cross (15[21]).

This woman with a chronic ailment, which she could not advertise before the crowd, seemed to have no chance of attracting the attention of Jesus when he was claimed by an important man for a case demanding instant attention. But the excitement of the occasion and the very crowd that surrounded Jesus provided her with an opportunity. 'For she said, if I can just touch his cloak, I shall get well.' Touch the tassel (*kraspedon*) of his cloak, say Matthew and Luke. That was the ritual tassel of blue wool which all Jews attached to the four corners of their cloak (Num. 15[38f.]) —which Jesus doubtless wore (for he was a religious man), though doubtless he did not make them conspicuous (Mt 23[5]). Their purpose was, not 'to be seen of men,' but to be visible to the man who wore them, 'that ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes.' As religious practices go, this does not seem to be a bad one. What could be more wholesome for us than that we should be constantly reminded, by some distinctive feature of our dress (if there is not a better way), that to be a Christian means to be a 'practising' Christian, that it involves a particular sort of life, a definite 'way' of living, which is not always the same as the way proposed by our heart and our eyes? The familiar liberal maxim, if it means anything, must mean that: 'Christianity is not a dogma but a life.' So it *is*—a very distinctive sort of life. The Jews felt that this involved, not ethical conduct alone, but also ritual performance. So, too, the Jewish Christians felt about the new 'way,' and St. Paul when he required his disciples to follow his 'ways in Christ' was thinking chiefly about ecclesiastical customs (1 Cor. 4[17]). It is not amazing therefore that Catholic Christians inherited the same feeling. It is amazing rather that in our day the notion should be current that the Christian life is just any sort of a life that heart and eyes may prompt us to lead. *We* need a *kraspedon* on our garments! The dog collar of the clergyman is visible to others, but not to himself.

This unhappy woman believed that if she could work her way through the crowd without being observed by Jesus, and could manage merely to touch the *kraspedon* (*Zizith* it was called in Hebrew) which hung behind his left shoulder, she would be healed of her disease. What notion could be more superstitious? But Jesus called it 'faith' —and, in fact, she at once had a feeling that she was healed. Then, doubtless, she would have escaped, and no one would have known about this miracle—if Jesus had not faced the crowd with the amazing question, 'Who touched my cloak?' The disciples gave expression to their wonder that he should say such a thing when obviously he was being jostled on every side. 'But he kept looking around to see who had done it,' for he had been 'conscious of a healing power going out of him.' That phrase represents Jesus' healing power as a very concrete thing, something like animal magnetism. It is the only instance where such a consciousness is ascribed to Jesus; but the statement of our Evangelist is not for this reason to be discarded, for in every other instance of healing that is recorded the sick person openly appealed for relief, both the disease and the cure were patent, and Jesus had no need of an occult perception. The fact that he usually effected his cures by some sort of physical contact suggests that he was conscious of a healing power going out of him. It was expected that he would use some such means. For example, Jairus begged him, 'Please come and lay your hands on my daughter.' That is not what Jesus actually did in this case: he took hold of the child's hand. He had different methods for different cases. Mentioning generically the few cures wrought in Nazareth, St. Mark says ($6^{5}$), 'he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.' But it is recorded a little later ($7^{32f.}$) that when he was asked to lay his hands on a man who was deaf and dumb he resorted to another and an extraordinary method; and no less extraordinary was his treatment of a blind man ($8^{23, 25}$), if that is not merely another version of the same miracle. The laying on of hands, however, seems to have been common in the Church: it was practised upon St. Paul (Acts $9^{17}$) and was practised by him (Acts $28^{8}$).

Jesus unfeelingly compelled this woman to disclose the

secret she was so anxious to conceal! No, she gladly told him the 'whole truth,' for she was no longer ashamed of her scourge when she was healed of it. Then Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your scourge.' A superfluous thing to say when she was already healed! No, such encouragement is never superfluous. Jesus cured by word as well as by touch. And this was *affectionate* encouragement such as this woman doubtless needed when she had clandestinely appropriated Jesus' healing power. Perhaps there would have been no permanent cure—and no memorial statue—if Jesus had not spoken in this way. He had addressed the paralytic as 'son' ($2^5$), and now he speaks to this woman as 'daughter.' And it was well for her to know that her faith had cured her, for she was in no danger of supposing that faith alone could do it without the healing power which went out from Jesus. She had faith when she edged through the crowd, but was not healed till she had touched the tassel. Literally, Jesus said, 'Your faith has *saved* you.' Salvation is a broad word, it includes body as well as soul. *Esklapios* was hailed as the Saviour. Jesus was actually the Saviour of men (not only typically) when he healed their bodies.

We are obliged here to translate continuously three paragraphs of the Gospel because the Evangelist has interjected this story of the woman with a hemorrhage in the midst of his account of the raising of Jairus' daughter. It would have been more logical of St. Mark to tell this story separately, but it was more historical to tell it as he did. The presumption that miracles do not happen, and that therefore such a cure could not have been effected, would of course compel us to reject this story *in toto*. But if we approach it without such a prejudice, we must confess that no story could be more plausibly told, that the internal evidence is strongly in its favour, and that its interjection in the midst of a narrative recounting a still more marvellous healing looks like history. It is a petty suggestion of Wellhausen's that the presence of a crowd gave the Evangelist an opportunity to lug this story in. For at this time there was always a crowd at hand, and with one word the Evangelist could have summoned it.

And the main narrative proceeds naturally, taking due account of this interruption. It was while the procession was held up by the woman that there came messengers from the president's house telling him that his daughter was already dead, and there was therefore no use of incommoding the teacher any further. Jesus, while he was occupied with the woman, overheard this report, but so far from renouncing his purpose to save the child, he comforted the father by saying, 'Have no fear, only have faith.' And on they went. But not all of them. Jesus performed most of his wonderful cures in public, and on this occasion he allowed the people to accompany him so far, to behold him cure a dying girl; but when it was reported that the child was already dead, he conceived that it was no place for a crowd. There was another case (or possibly two cases, $7^{33}$, $8^{23}$) when, for less obvious reasons, Jesus took a man 'privately apart from the crowd' before he healed him. In the case of this child he did not permit all of his Apostles to follow him, not even the first four (for Andrew was omitted), but 'only Peter and James and John.' 'John and James' is the order in St. Luke, reflecting the pre-eminence which John enjoyed in the Church after the martyrdom of his brother (Acts $12^{2}$).

The choice of three men to be his witnesses on the most secret occasions, as here at the raising of a dead child, and at the Transfiguration, and in the Garden, was not unconnected, one may think, with the provision of the Mosaic law which required 'two witnesses or three' (Deut. $19^{15}$; Mt $18^{16}$; 2 Cor. $13^{1}$; 1 Tim. $5^{19}$). When in Mt $18^{20}$ 'two or three' are counted sufficient to constitute a Church, they are not regarded as sufficient in themselves, but only as *witnesses* that Christ is in the midst of them. When Christ is there, two or three witnesses of his presence are not a small Church, and by no means a part or branch of a Church, but the whole Church. And three million people would not make a Church, without Christ veritably present with them. And if they witness that Christ is among them when he is not, they are false witnesses.

When Jesus had dismissed one crowd he found another, a crowd of professional mourners or lugubrious neighbours

who had been expecting the child's death and at once took possession of the house—' a tumult of people wailing and making loud lament.' Jesus had sufficient authority to put all those people out, though they derided him for saying, ' The child is *not* dead, but asleep.' He took with him into the child's bedroom the father and mother, in addition to his three witnesses. That was done not only out of consideration for the parents' feeling, but to spare the child the terror of awakening among strange men. Jesus' miracle was therefore performed in the presence of six witnesses, including the little girl. The resuscitations ascribed to Elijah and Elisha were wrought in completest secrecy, the prophets shutting themselves up alone in a room with the dead child (1 Kings $17^{19}$; 2 Kings $4^{33}$). Here, at the end, Jesus requires secrecy about what had happened—not, of course, about the notorious fact that a child was made well who was thought to be dead, but about what occurred before a few witnesses in the room where the child lay. What was there to tell ? one may ask. Jesus resorted to no mysterious abracadabra. He at once approached the child and took hold of her hand, with an encouraging and endearing command, *Talitha koum*—little girl, get up. ' And the girl got up at once and began to walk about.' (It is explained parenthetically that she was by no means too little to walk.) ' And he said that they should give her something to eat.' Practical—but how very prosaic ! What was there in all this that could not properly be told ? But was that all ? Does the narrative give, or even seek to give, an impression of the parents' grief and incredulous joy, of the child's wonder, or of the uncanny awe which all the witnesses must have experienced in the presence of death and life ? Death and life in perfect simplicity. There are no deeper mysteries. Is it a solemn thing to stand with bereaved parents beside a child just dead ? Are ghosts more uncanny than a dead child that gets up and walks ? It requires no stretch of imagination to conceive that six witnesses had experiences in that room which it would not be decent to talk about. And Peter, it seems, never felt himself released from the reticence which Jesus imposed. He told only what every one might know. He could divulge the magic word which

Jesus pronounced—the precise sound in Aramaic—for it was nothing more mysterious than 'Little girl, get up.'

Before seeing the child Jesus affirmed that she was not dead, but asleep. How did he know it? By clairvoyance? That is a rare gift, but not so extraordinary that we must deny it to Jesus. It is no credential of divinity, in any case. Or was the child really dead and brought to life again? It is futile to discuss such a question so long as we do not know what life is, or what is death, or how suspended animation differs from death. Every one thought that the child was dead, and the awesomeness of the experience was not diminished by Jesus' incredible assertion that she was only sleeping. But perhaps we had better credit it. I am not indisposed to believe that Jesus could have raised the dead, but I see in this story no compelling proof that he did so. I am much more impressed by the saying ascribed to Jesus in St. Matthew's Gospel ($11^{5}$), 'The dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.' That seems to us an incongruous collocation and an anticlimax, and I wonder if anybody but Jesus could have listed his miracles in that order. It seems to me as if Jesus would naturally have done so. To him, nothing was mightier than the Gospel. But neither Matthew nor Mark recount any instance that is unequivocally a resurrection from the dead. Luke's story of the raising of the widow's son at Nain ($7^{11-17}$) may be true, but it seems to belong to a late stratum of tradition; and the story of Lazarus in the Fourth Gospel has so clearly the symbolical intention of exhibiting Jesus as the Life that it does not belong unequivocally to history. We must make it clear to ourselves, at all events, that though Jesus had raised the dead to life, the Jews might not unreasonably have declined to recognize him as the Christ. For their Scriptures recounted that mere prophets had done as much. And who expected the Christ to work miracles? Unless it was a cosmic miracle ('a sign from heaven')! We on our part are naïve when we count the raising of the dead a proof of divinity. Such a thought could not occur to us if we had not an inferior conception of the divine—or if 'divine' meant more to us than a remote God*likeness*. Jesus might be a *divus* then, but not *deus*. And we need

still more to make it clear to ourselves that if the daughter of Jairus was dead and was made alive again, that was merely a resuscitation of the dead—it was not a *resurrection*. The Resurrection means a new heaven and a new earth. Those who are resurrected from the dead die no more, ' they are as angels in heaven ' (Mk $12^{25}$). The Gospels contain no instance of a resurrection from the dead—except the resurrection of Jesus. To connect his untimely resurrection with the general resurrection of the dead St. Paul speaks of him as ' the firstfruits ' of the great harvest. There is a feeling after such a connection in St. Matthew's mythical account of ' many bodies of the saints that were raised ' after Jesus' resurrection ($27^{52f.}$). One thing that never could occur to any writer in the New Testament is the notion that the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul—the belief that human personality may survive bodily death—is just the same thing as faith in the resurrection of the dead.

It is important to note that this story is the last concrete account of Jesus' activity in Galilee. For the following paragraph about the visit to Nazareth is misplaced—as we have had occasion to remark. And the mission of the Twelve is the programmatic finale of the Galilean period.

It cannot plausibly be maintained that Jesus left Galilee because his popularity was waning or because he was unable to hold his own against his enemies. Both by word and deed he had the better of his opponents, and his last and most astounding miracle must have won the allegiance of one of the principal men of the town.

¶ 38. Nazareth.

Mk $6^{1-6a}$. **And leaving there he went to his native place, followed by his disciples. [2] And when the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and the many who heard him were astounded. ' Where did he get this ? ' they said, ' and what is this wisdom he is endowed with ? and these miracles which his hands perform ? [3] Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon ? And are not his sisters living here among us ? ' So they were offended at him. [4] And Jesus said to them, ' A**

**prophet is not despised except in his native place and among his kinsfolk and in his own house.' [5] And there he could not do any miracle, except laying his hands on a few sick people and curing them. [6] And he was astonished at their lack of faith.**

Luke puts this visit to Nazareth earlier ($4^{16-30}$). Probably he was influenced by the same critical considerations which led us to remark, when we were discussing ¶¶ 19–21, that the visit to the home town must have come *before* the visit of his family to Capernaum. But Luke goes to an extreme, putting it so early that there were no notable miracles yet performed in Capernaum to provoke the wonder and jealousy of the people of Nazareth. We cannot precisely fix the time of this visit to Nazareth. It might have been before the call of the Twelve. In that case the disciples who followed him were the Four.

But wherever we put this visit, there is no doubt that ' there '— *i.e.* the place he started from— means Capernaum, and that it was to Nazareth he went—though Mark calls it simply ' his native place.' That is the proper meaning of *patris*. We might suppose that it was used broadly here to denote the town which was actually his home from childhood. But if that interpretation were plausible in the first verse, it is not easy to maintain it where the same word occurs a second time in Jesus' saying, ' A prophet is not despised except in his native place and among his kinsfolk and in his own house.' The fact that St. Mark does not recount the story of the birth in Bethlehem is not significant, because the childhood of Jesus lay beyond the scope of his narrative. But this passage suggests that he did not know the story. It is true that Matthew uses this same word to indicate Nazareth, although he recounts one version of the birth in Bethlehem. But that signifies no more than that he copied Mark without observing this incongruity with his tradition. That was characteristic of the First Gospel. Luke, on the other hand, was aware that this word was inconsistent with his story of the birth in Bethlehem, and he therefore exchanged it, in the first instance, for another which aptly expressed his notion : *tethrammenos*, ' where he was brought up '

Jesus taught in the synagogue of Nazareth as he did during the early days in Capernaum. That is another reason for placing the visit to Nazareth earlier than Mark does, for we have seen (p. 164) reason to believe that he did not continue this practice after his controversy with the scribes had become bitter. Characteristically, Mark does not tell us what Jesus said on this occasion. We are told only that the large audience was ' astounded.' They could not conceive how he came by such wisdom—this man whom they knew as the village carpenter, whose mother and four brothers and various sisters were not distinguished above their fellow-citizens. It is evident that Jesus as a youth had not attracted attention by his precocity and had never before assumed the rôle of teacher in his home town. We cannot wonder that the people were now ' astounded ' ; and it is intelligible that, in spite of his ' wisdom,' they were disinclined to regard him as anything very extraordinary. He was, in fact, unable to perform any miracle there, except curing a few sick people by laying his hands upon them. Jesus, in his turn, ' was astonished at their lack of faith.'

St. Mark's narrative does not explain why this negative attitude (being ' astounded ') was followed not by indifference but by a feeling of offence. Perhaps Luke (who certainly relied upon an independent source) has given us the right explanation of the hostility which Jesus encountered in Nazareth—an hostility which, according to Luke, was murderous in its intent. Jesus there expressed by a ' parable '—' Physician, heal yourself '—the disappointed expectation of the crowd, that he would perform in his own town miracles at least as great as they had heard of his doing in Capernaum, and his comment upon that ($4^{25-28}$) offended their local pride and aroused furious anger.

Luke implies that Jesus did no notable miracles in Nazareth, but Mark says frankly that he ' *could* not.' Matthew softens this by saying merely that ' he *did* not do many.' This he ascribes (justly) to their lack of faith. But it is not really flattering to Jesus to suggest that he could but *would not* help the suffering people who were brought to him.

*Tekton*—the word we here translate carpenter—does

not mean a house-builder. Wood was too scarce in Palestine to be used even for the floors or ceilings of the houses. If Jesus was a worker in wood, we must understand that he was a joiner. But the word *tekton* would apply as well to a blacksmith—and that is the meaning some of the Church Fathers preferred. If Jesus was a house-constructor, he must have been a mason. The three principal manual trades can each lay claim to him with some show of reason. Matthew's phrase, 'the son of the carpenter,' is evidently chosen to avoid the implication that Jesus himself worked with his hands. 'Joseph's son' is St. Luke's phrase. The father is not mentioned by St. Mark, the implication being that he was dead. The mother and four brothers are mentioned by name. It was a pious family: the sons were named Jacob, Joseph, Judas, and Simon, after four of the Patriarchs.

'A prophet,' said Jesus, 'is not despised except in his native place and among his kinsfolk and in his own house.' This is an analogy—a 'parable,' as Jesus would call it. In these words, therefore, Jesus did not claim for himself the title of prophet—any more than in the reference he makes (according to St. Luke) to the examples of Elijah and Elisha. The people of Nazareth were very far from recognizing him in this rôle. No such title was given him in Capernaum, though there was a rumour that he was like one of the old prophets (Mk 6[15]). Not until he entered Jerusalem with an enthusiastic caravan of Galileans was he hailed with this title (Mt 21[11]), 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.' Some, however, imagined that he might be Elijah. Feeling after a title that might suit him, this was their highest reach, their boldest guess. Only by revelation was he disclosed to his intimate disciples as the Christ. And when he himself affirmed this claim before the high-priestly court he was condemned as a blasphemer. Such was the Jesus according to St. Mark. The picture of Matthew and Luke is not so consistent. But in the story of the visit to Nazareth Luke's source does not imply that Jesus's mysterious saying, 'To-day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears,' was a clear claim that he was the Christ.

¶ 39. The Mission of the Twelve.

Mk 6[6b–13]. **Then he made a tour for teaching around the villages. [7] And he summoned the Twelve and proceeded to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, [8] and ordered them to take nothing but a stick for the journey—no bread, no bag, no coppers in their girdle —[9] but they were to be shod with sandals, and not to wear two coats. [10] And he said to them, 'Wherever you enter into a house, stay there till you leave the place. [11] And if any place does not welcome you, shake off the dust from your feet as a protest against them.' [12] So they went forth and proclaimed the need of repentance. [13] And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many sick people and cured them.**

'*Then*,' as the word is used here by the Evangelist, connects the mission of the Twelve with the visit of Nazareth; but if we are convinced that this visit is misplaced, the connection is doubtless artificial. The mission of the Twelve seems to belong properly where Mark put it, *after* Jesus had left Capernaum, not to return to it again openly, except perhaps to meet the Apostles on their return and start with them away from Galilee. Later, he passed through Galilee secretly and spent a night in Capernaum on his way to Jerusalem (9[30–33]).

The mission of the Twelve becomes significant when we perceive that Jesus intended it to be his last public act in Galilee. As a practical measure to give publicity to the Gospel it seems superfluous. Jesus' name and message were already known everywhere. As a means of training the Apostles for an independent ministry it was too brief. Wellhausen justly remarks that after this 'experiment' the Apostles were just as dependent and passive as before. But this was not an experiment: it was a symbolical gesture, a prophetic last word—'whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.'

The instructions which Jesus gave his disciples on this occasion are reported by the three Synoptists (Mt 10[5–15]; Lk 9[1–6]) with the slight discrepancies which we have learned

to expect. Matthew and Luke deny to these pilgrims even the use of a stick; Matthew at least (but see Lk $10^4$) will not allow them to be shod; and while Mark requires that they shall not 'wear' two tunics, the other Evangelists say that they shall not 'have' two—which comes to the same thing, for they had no baggage. Matthew prohibits them from carrying 'gold or silver or copper in their girdles'—superfluously, because in Palestine poor people would hardly have any other money than the 'coppers' mentioned by Mark. Luke speaks in the language of the great world when he mentions small silver coins. In the case of all these discrepancies Mark's text is evidently to be preferred. But Matthew reports other injunctions which deserve credit, coming as they do from an independent source, which in part agrees with Luke's story ($10^{1-12}$) of the mission of the Seventy. That I take to be another version of the mission of the Twelve. It is natural enough that St. Luke, finding it in a form so different from St. Mark's account, should have regarded it as another story. We do not know whether he or his source supplied the number seventy. That, too, was symbolical of all Israel (Num. $11^{16, 17}$). St. Mark not only does not mention the mission of the Seventy, but he leaves no place for it *after* the mission of the Twelve. The brief account of St. Mark is materially supplemented by Matthew and Luke. The haste of the mission is indicated by a phrase of St. Luke's ($10^4$), 'Salute no man by the way.' St. Mark says simply that 'they went forth and proclaimed the need of repentance,' but both Matthew and Luke give their message in its positive form: 'Say unto them, The Kingdom of God is impending.' That is the plain reason for repentance. Both give the injunction about greeting the house they enter as guests: 'Peace to this house.' And both enlarge upon Mark's directions about the symbolical gesture they are to use as a protest against a village which does not welcome them. Like Jesus himself, they were not only to proclaim the Gospel, but to heal the sick and drive out demons. Mark alone mentions anointing with oil as a means of healing. That was not Jesus' use, but it was a custom of the early Church (Jas. $5^{14}$). Doubtless many of the rules here prescribed by Jesus for the

mission of the Twelve were observed later by the missionaries of the Church, not only in Palestine but in the great world. But that observation is very far from justifying the suspicion that there was no mission of the Twelve during Jesus' stay in Galilee. It cannot plausibly be pretended that rules developed later in the world mission of the Church were unhistorically transferred to this earlier time. For some of the rules which Jesus prescribed for the Twelve were appropriate for that moment only and for a mission in Galilee. 'Do not go among the Gentiles, and do not enter a Samaritan town' (Mt $10^5$), was never again an apt rule for Christian missionaries. 'Two by two' was a wise counsel which was followed generally in the early Christian mission, and centuries later incorporated in the rule of St. Benedict. Staff and sandals and a coarse tunic remained the characteristic equipment of monks and pilgrims. But the *single* tunic which sufficed for Palestine in midsummer was not enough for other seasons and for the world mission. Jesus when he was crucified in the spring wore more garments than the tunic woven in one piece. The earliest Christian art plausibly represents the Apostles clothed with the pallium, the woollen mantle which was worn wherever Greek culture had spread, and I can easily credit the report (2 Tim. $4^{13}$) that the greatest traveller of them all wore the chasuble (*phailones, phainoles, paenula, casula*), a sort of poncho which was an efficient protection from the weather. Luke $22^{36}$ is proof that the severity of the earlier rule was mitigated before the mission of the Church began, and it requires some courage to deny that this relaxation was prescribed by Jesus. 'But he who has a purse must take it now, and the same with a wallet'—that anybody could have invented. No one but Jesus could have added, 'and he who has no sword must sell his tunic and buy one.' Obviously, both purse and wallet, money and bread, were needed by the missionaries who went out to preach the Gospel in all the world, whereas at a certain moment in Galilee they were not necessary. Before the Church was known as an apostate sect hospitality could everywhere be relied upon—as it could again later, by the pilgrims and monks and friars of the Middle Ages. But the general

principle was not changed. ‘ The labourer is worthy of his food.’ Therefore, do not go from house to house, asking for a little here and a little there ; but ‘ into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go forth.’ The principle here involved is authenticated by St. Paul as an ordinance of Jesus. That 1 Tim. 5[8] quotes precisely the phrase of Lk 10[7], ‘ The labourer is worthy of his hire,’ may justify the suspicion that St. Paul is not the writer of this Epistle ; but it is indubitably St. Paul who speaks in 1 Cor. 9[14], with clear enough reference to the instructions for the Twelve : ‘ And so the Lord ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel.’ Jesus prescribed so few ecclesiastical ordinances. We cannot be sure that he left us any other rule that is not of a purely moral character. And I who, without shame, have lived from the Gospel for more than thirty years, cannot but wonder that the Quakers repudiate this ordinance and call me a ‘ hireling minister.’ On the other hand, I do not doubt that there may be occasions (as St. Paul perceived) when it is better that the ministers of the Gospel should earn their living by manual, or, at least secular, labour—and I sometimes suspect that the due time and place for that is now and here. Jesus sent forth his missionaries ‘ as lambs in the midst of wolves,’ but he required them to be bold : ‘ Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, Even the dust from your city that cleaveth to our feet we wipe off against you : howbeit know this, that the Kingdom of God is impending.’ We learn from this that Jesus expected his disciples to be as trenchant as he was, and any rule, however good, which has a tendency to slacken the preacher’s courage and weaken his authority had better be discarded.

It is true that the Apostles, after their successful mission, were as ‘ passive and dependent as before.’ Renan struggled valiantly to make them appear heroes—in spite of the candour of the Evangelists. Under the influence of Carlyle he could think of no other way of accounting for Christianity —for its success not only, but for its intrinsic value. And he had to represent Jesus as a religious genius ! We who

are beyond all that, and no longer believe in epoch-making personalities, speak commonly of a Christian '*movement*.' But we mean nothing very different. We mean by a 'movement' something essentially human, explicable by the laws of mass psychology. We like to think of the Christian 'movement' as a surging up of hidden human potentialities. The Gospels plainly conceive of the Gospel as a revelation and represent the Christ as an instance of God's condescension. And that seems to me more plausible. Between these contrasted points of view there is a world of difference.

# *PART II*

## WANDERING. §§6, 7

Mk $6^{14}$—$9^{29}$

### Section 6. ¶¶ 40–54

### RETIREMENT

Mk $6^{14}$—$8^{24}$

¶¶ 40, 41. Herod puts John to Death.

¶ 40. Mk $6^{14-29}$. **And king Herod heard about Jesus, for his name had become well known, and he said, 'John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are working in him.' [15] Others said, 'He is Elijah,' and others again, 'He is a prophet, like one of the old prophets.' [16] But when Herod heard these opinions he said, 'The very John whom I beheaded is risen.'**

¶ 41. **[17] For this Herod had sent and arrested John and put him in prison under chains, on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he was married to her. [18] For John had said to Herod, 'You have no right to have your brother's wife.' [19] So Herodias had a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but was unable to do so [20] because Herod stood in awe of John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, so he protected him. He was much perplexed when he listened to him, and yet he found pleasure in listening to him. [21] But a favourable occasion occurred when Herod gave a feast on his birthday to his chief officials and his generals and the notables of Galilee, [22] and the daughter of this Herodias came in and danced, so delighting Herod and his guests that the king said to the girl, 'Ask me anything you like, and I will give it to you.' [23] And he swore to her, 'Whatever you ask I will give you—up to half of my kingdom.' [24] So she went out and said to her mother, 'What shall**

**I ask for ? ' and she said, ' The head of John the Baptist.'**
**[25] Then she returned at once to the king and made her request,**
**' I want you to give me right away on a dish the head of John**
**the Baptist.' [26] The king was much distressed, but for the**
**sake of his oaths and his guests he did not like to refuse her,**
**[27] so at once he sent a guard with orders to bring his head.**
**And he went and beheaded John in prison [28] and brought his**
**head on a dish and gave it to the girl, and she gave it to her**
**mother. [29] And when his disciples heard of it they went**
**and took his body away and laid it in a tomb.**

Upon this vivid story I need hardly make a comment. This scene of brilliant depravity at Herod's court is wonderfully well painted to serve as a foil for the stern figure of John the ascetic prophet. The question whether it is true or not has no interest at all for the history of Jesus. It may be, as Josephus says, that John was imprisoned and beheaded in the castle of Machaerus, on the other side of the Jordan, instead of near the tetrarch's court at Tiberias, where Herod could enjoy frequent conversations with him, and conveniently send to fetch his head after dinner. The affirmation may perhaps be capable of proof that Herod Antipas did not marry Herodias (his niece and sister-in-law) till several years after John's death. That would only mean that Herod did not kill John at the solicitation of Herodias, but because (as Josephus says) he feared his political influence. Yet Josephus agrees with Mark in representing Herod as weak and indolent. What does not seem plausible to me is the suggestion of Wellhausen that such a story as this was invented to clear Herod of responsibility. I can see no such tendency in the Gospels. St. Luke, it is true, says ($23^{8}$) that Herod was delighted at the opportunity of seeing Jesus at Jerusalem, ' for he had long wanted to see him.' Perhaps it would have been truer to say that he had long wanted to *kill* him. But that, in fact, is what Luke does say in another place ($13^{32}$), and at the beginning of his Gospel ($3^{20}$) he represents the imprisonment of John as the climax of Herod's many wickednesses. Wellhausen exaggerates when he says that a royal person like Herod cannot be dragged into the story merely to fill up a gap.

I think of 'Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay. . . .' But I agree entirely with the opinion that this long passage about the martyrdom of the Baptist at the hand of Herod is not irrelevant to the narrative of Jesus' life. Wellhausen says that it must have had a significant place in the earliest tradition. But it seems to me that it has a very significant place here in St. Mark's Gospel. It marks a decisive turning-point in Jesus' life, and it reveals to us in part the reasons which prompted him to leave Galilee.

Herod's sudden interest in Jesus might well have seemed dangerous. His superstitious belief that this was John the Baptist, the very John whom he had beheaded, risen from the dead, might not have prevented Herod from killing him again. But it is not easy for me to admit that Jesus' determination to get out of Galilee was due to the fear of losing his life. The saying recorded by St. Luke does not sound like that ($13^{31-34}$): 'Just then some Pharisees came to tell him, "Get away from here, for Herod intends to kill you." "Go tell that fox," he replied, "I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and on the third day complete my task! But I must journey on, to-day, to-morrow, and the next day; it would never do for a prophet to perish except in Jerusalem! O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, slaying the prophets and stoning those who have been sent to you! How often I would fain have gathered your children as a fowl gathers her brood under her wings! But you would not have it!"' (Moffatt). The fox was for the Jews not a symbol of cunning but of cruelty. Jesus recognized the peril, and he evaded it. For he was determined not to be killed in Galilee, and by an obscure tetrarch who vainly intrigued to be made king, but in Jerusalem and before the whole world, at the hand of the Roman governor, and on a cross. I suppose that the same motive explains his requirement that they should have two swords in the garden of Gethsemane (Lk $22^{36-38}$). Two swords were enough to save him from being obscurely assassinated. But in neither case can we suppose that he was afraid when he was merely planning for a sublimer death. And he was confident that Herod would not get him: 'For it is not possible—not ideally conceivable—that a prophet should perish out of

Jerusalem.' In this saying, though it is the bitterest he ever uttered, we recognize the authentic voice of Jesus. Jesus was not afraid that Herod would get him, but he used due diligence to provide that he might not. Besides, if up to this point we have read the story aright, Jesus' ministry in Galilee was completed. In sending out his Apostles he had already made what he supposed to be a farewell gesture. Before him, as he felt, there remained nothing to do but to 'journey on.' He knew his goal: it was Jerusalem. But where he was to journey to-day and to-morrow he did not know—except that it must be outside Herod's jurisdiction.

But Herod was not the only nor the most important personage mentioned in the long passage we are here considering. It was not for his sake this passage was interjected in the middle of the Gospel, and it was not Herod that made a turning-point in Jesus' life. The first brief paragraph in this passage speaks of Herod's sinister interest in Jesus, but in the second paragraph that great man figures only as the contemptible murderer of John the Baptist. It is John the Baptist that has interest for the Gospel narrative. And rightly, for he was a figure of paramount interest for Jesus. It was at his baptism under John that Jesus heard his call ($1^{11}$): 'Thou art my Son, my Beloved, in thee is my delight.' Not long afterwards he recognized John's imprisonment as the signal for him to stand forth in his place ($1^{14}$), and it cannot be thought strange if in John's death he recognized a new signal. It was indeed a significant signal, for it was the martyrdom of a prophet—his forerunner! If Jesus already had forebodings of a tragic end, this might well clarify his vision: the martyrdom of the Forerunner presaged the martyrdom of the Son of Man. The Gospels do not suggest that Jesus had from the first a clear conception of what he was to suffer. In a man, foreknowledge absolute would be not superhuman only, but inhuman, cruelly inhuman. It seems as if Jesus, like us, had to be content with light upon his daily path. And now light was shed—only too glaringly—when he had need of it. But I see no reason why we must deny to Jesus a foreboding. Most of us understand what Wordsworth means by 'fallings from us, vanishings; blank misgivings of a creature moving

about in worlds not realized'—and might not Jesus have such experiences? It is certain that the disciples did not know why Jesus was leaving Galilee. It is possible that Jesus himself was not able at first to give a reasoned account of his unrest, the feeling that he must journey on. It is not derogatory to Jesus to suppose that his life developed like a plant, with a natural, instinctive rhythm. The amazing life that was in him was for thirty years hidden in Nazareth—and so far as we know he did not feel the slightest urge to manifest himself, presumably did not himself know what was hidden in him. Then suddenly the plant flowered in Galilee. But only for a brief season. In due sequence the need of solitude made itself felt. And an appreciable period of time was necessary for maturation. We can all of us detect in ourselves profound analogies with the growth of the plant. A deep, and often a long unconscious preparation precedes our clear conception and sharp resolution. The plant knows its signals of sun and rain, and commonly some outward event is necessary to crystallize our vague presentiments. Herod was such a signal to Jesus, not because he began to take an uncanny interest in him, but because he put to death John the Baptist. By this act Herod Antipas won such a place in the middle of the Gospel as Pontius Pilate won in the middle of the Creed.

How profound an interest Jesus took in the character and fate of John is revealed to us by an authentic story which Matthew ($11^{2-19}$) and Luke ($7^{18-35}$) record. I translate it here from St. Matthew's text, which is the more complete, and here for the first and only time I find myself obliged to comment at considerable length upon a passage which is not found in St. Mark. We cannot afford to neglect anything that throws light upon the most critical moment in Jesus' history and the obscurest problem we encounter in the study of it.

> Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of Christ, he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the Coming One, or are we to look out for someone else?' And Jesus replied to them, 'Go and report to John what you hear and see: The blind see, the lame walk, lepers

are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who does not take offence at me.' But as these messengers went away Jesus proceeded to speak to the crowd about John :

' What did you go into the desert to look at ?
A reed swayed by the wind ?
Then what did you go out to see ?
A man luxuriously clothed ?
Men dressed like that you find in the palaces of kings.
Then why did you go out there ?
To see a prophet ?
Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet !
This is the very one about whom the Scripture says,
" Here I send my messenger on before you ;
He will prepare the way in front of you."

' *Amen*, I say unto you, no one has arisen among the sons of women who is greater than John the Baptist—and yet the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he ! From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven is attacked with violence, and the violent are taking it by storm. For up to the coming of John all the Prophets and the Law prophesied of this time : and if you are able to receive it, he himself is Elijah who was to come. He who has an ear, let him listen ! '

Albert Schweitzer was the first to appreciate the importance of this passage for the understanding of Jesus, and I can do no better than to quote his interpretation. As I have no desire to hide my dependence upon Schweitzer, I quote here full twenty-five pages (pp. 131–156) from his *Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, seeking to improve upon the translation which I made fourteen years ago. That is more than enough to elucidate this present passage ; but now that we have reached the middle point of the Gospel, it will be reassuring to find a light which illuminates the path we have been travelling as well as the way we have to go.

## The Character Ascribed to Jesus on the Ground of His Public Ministry

1. *The Problem and the Facts.*

Did the people have a presentiment of the Messianic dignity of Jesus ?

The problem must be viewed in relation to three facts.

(1) In Jerusalem none of the discussions turned upon the question of Jesus' Messianic dignity, but had to do rather with questions about the Law and with topics of the day. Hitherto, far too little weight has been attached to the fact that neither the people nor the scribes adopted toward Jesus such a position as we might expect if they had regarded him as a Messianic claimant. How different must have been the conflicts and disputes of the Jerusalem days, if the people had been agitated by the question : Is he the Messiah, or is he not ?—can he possibly be that, or is it impossible ? As a matter of fact, he was regarded simply as the spokesman of the Galileans, before whom the scholars of the capital propounded their scholastic problems —whether with a sincere mind, or with the perfidious intention of destroying his authority.

(2) During the whole of the period after he left Galilee Jesus was in contact with the people for only a few days— from the crossing of the Jordan until his death. During this time he made no clear disclosure to them about his Messiahship, nor gave them any hint which they were able to understand in this sense. At his trial the suborned witnesses knew nothing of this sort that they could allege against him. In their testimony the remarkable thing is (though few are inclined to remark upon it) that they do *not* charge him with the presumption of making himself out to be the Messiah. For them, his impious pretension resolves itself into a disrespectful word about the Temple. Picture what course the trial would have taken if the hired accusers had been able to discover Messianic hints in Jesus' speeches !

(3) From these facts we would conclude that up to the last moment Jesus was regarded by the people in Jerusalem

no otherwise than by the people of Galilee—as a great prophet, perhaps the Forerunner, but with no suspicion that he might be the Messiah. There are two facts, however, which do not seem to comport with this conclusion.

According to our common notion of it, the entrance into Jerusalem was a Messianic ovation. Therefore the people must have had a presentiment of Jesus' character and dignity.

The high priest put to him the question whether he were the Messiah. Therefore *he* knew of Jesus' claim.

This presents us with a clear cut question: In the Jerusalem days, was Jesus regarded as a Messianic pretendant, or was he not? One ought not to obscure this question by talking about a more or less vague 'presentiment' of his claim. 'The presentiment of the Messiahship of Jesus' is a modern invention. The populace would hardly have been swayed hither and thither by a dark and mysterious presentiment. It must have been a question of belief or unbelief. Whoever held him to be the Messiah must accompany him through fire and death—to glory. Whoever had no such faith, but only a presentiment that he cherished such a pretension, must give the signal to stone the blasphemer. There was no third course.

The facts in general speak in favour of the opinion that in Jerusalem the people and the Pharisees ascribed to Jesus no Messianic pretension—any more than they did at an earlier period. But the entrance into Jerusalem, regarded as a Messianic ovation, remains then a riddle, and we are also at a loss how to account for the fact that the high priest knew enough to put the question to him about his Messiahship.

We have but two alternatives. On the one hand we can cling to the common opinion. But then we have to confess that the last period of Jesus' life is incomprehensible. It will not do to assume that at the beginning of this period in Jerusalem (triumphal entry) Jesus was regarded as the Messiah, and again at the end (the question of the high priest at the trial), whereas the intervening days give no hint of this whatever.

On the other hand, we may suspect that the entrance into

Jerusalem and the question of the high priest have been misunderstood. Was the ovation at his entrance intended for the Messianic claimant ? Did the question of the high priest express a perception which all shared ? Did the high priest infer from the life and works and discourses of Jesus that he claimed to be the Messiah ? or did he perhaps learn through betrayal the secret which since Caesarea Philippi was known only by his trusted disciples ?

The problem of Jesus' Messiahship appears in its hardest form in the formula we now use to express it : How is it possible that from the beginning Jesus knew himself to be the Messiah and yet to the very end did not permit this to appear in his public proclamation of the Kingdom ? How in the long run could it remain hidden from the people that his speeches were an expression of his Messianic consciousness ? Jesus was a Messiah who during his public ministry would not be Messiah, did not have to be and could not properly be that, for the sake of his mission ! That is the way history poses the problem.

2. *Jesus taken for Elijah because of his Solidarity with the Son of Man.*

What character could and must the people ascribe to Jesus in view of his public ministry ? That is the question we now have to deal with.

The Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom belong together. Hence, if Jesus had preached a Kingdom already come, he would have been obliged to indicate the Messiah—that is to say, he must have begun by legitimating before the people his own claim to be regarded as the Messiah.

As a matter of fact, he proclaimed the Kingdom as an event that was yet to come ; and this of itself absolutely excluded the possibility that anyone might guess that the Messiah was he. A future Kingdom implied a future Messiah. If Jesus nevertheless had Messianic pretensions, this notion was absolutely remote from the people, for his proclamation of the Kingdom excluded even the barest conjecture of such a thing. Hence not even the cries of the demons availed to put the people on the right track.

All conjectures to this effect were rendered perfectly impossible by the way Jesus had of speaking of the Messiah

in the third person, and as one who was still to come. He told his disciples when he sent them on their mission that the Son of Man would come before they had gone through all the cities of Israel (Mt $10^{23}$). In Mark ($8^{38}$) he promised the people that the Son of Man would soon appear for judgment, and the Kingdom of God come with power. And even in the last days at Jerusalem he spoke in the same way about the judgment the Son of Man would hold when he should come in his glory surrounded by the angels (Mt $25^{31}$).

Only the disciples after the revelation at Caesarea Philippi, and the high priest after the ' Yes ' of Jesus, could detect what Jesus had in mind when he spoke of himself in connection with the Son of Man—for they knew his secret. For his other hearers, however, Jesus of Nazareth and the personage he spoke of as the Son of Man remained two entirely distinct individuals.

Before the people Jesus merely maintained that between himself and the Son of Man there existed an absolute but unexplained solidarity. It is only in this form that his own gigantic personality obtruded in his preaching of the Kingdom. Only he who under all conditions is faithful to him, the proclaimer of this coming Son of Man, will find entrance into the Kingdom at the Day of Judgment. Jesus will intervene in his behalf before God and before the Son of Man (Mk $8^{38}$ ; Mt $10^{32, 33}$). One must be ready to give up all to follow him, for only so can one show one's self worthy of him (Mt $10^{37, 38}$). Hence in the Sermon on the Mount he pronounced those blessed who are reviled and persecuted for his sake, because thereby they are assured of pertaining to the Kingdom. From Jesus' standpoint this absolute solidarity between God and the Son of Man on the one hand, and himself on the other, constituted no enigma because it was based upon his Messianic consciousness ; he could speak in this way because he was conscious of being himself the Son of Man. But for the people, and for the disciples themselves before Caesarea Philippi, this mode of speech was a puzzling challenge. How can Jesus of Nazareth proclaim with such sovereign self-confidence his solidarity with the Son of Man ? This claim compelled the

people to reflect about him and to ask who this can be whose influence extends from the premessianic into the Messianic aeon so that God and the Son of Man admit to the Kingdom all who confess him, unless (as he once expressly admonished them) moral unworthiness rendered nugatory their confession. Only one personality had the significance which Jesus claimed for himself. That was Elijah, the mighty forerunner, whose manifestation was to bridge the gap between this age and the next. Hence the people took Jesus for Elijah. That expresses the highest estimate his personality obliged them to form. This is not one of the cases of crass misunderstanding which we find in later strata of the Gospel narrative ; but the people simply could not come to any other conclusion, judging from Jesus' manifestation and his declarations.

3. *Jesus identified with Elijah by his miracles.*

In order to understand the attitude of Jesus' contemporaries towards him and his work, we must rid ourselves of two false assumptions which unconsciously control us. We suppose that the people were then looking for the Messiah ; instead they were, as a matter of course, expecting *first* the Forerunner. In the second place, we suppose that they had recognised the Baptist as the Forerunner. These are the two assumptions which spoil our historical perspective.

The appearance of the Messiah, in conjunction with the great crisis which he is to bring about, constitutes the supernatural drama which the world awaits. But before the curtain rises, someone must step in front of the expectant people to pronounce the prologue to the piece ; and then, when the curtain is lifted, he will associate himself with the celestial actors. Therefore what people were expecting was not the raising of the curtain and the manifestation of the Messiah, but the appearance of the man who was designated to pronounce the prologue. One must be alert to detect the entrance of the Forerunner, if one would know to what hour the hand of the world clock points.

Elijah, however, had not yet appeared, for the Baptist had not legitimated himself as such. He lacked to this end the display of supernatural power. Signs and wonders necessarily belonged to the epoch immediately preceding

the Kingdom. A general outpouring of the Spirit and of prophesying, with wonders in heaven and earth—that was to occur before the Day of the Lord. So the prophet Joel ($3^{28ff.}$) foretold; and Peter appealed to this passage in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts $2^{17-22}$): the gift of tongues, he claimed, ought to be recognized as a sign of the Last Times; God had raised Jesus from the dead, and the Kingdom must soon dawn.

This passage of Joel was thus applied to the time immediately preceding the Messianic age, the time of miracles, in which, according to the prophecy of Malachi ($3^{23, 24}$) the Forerunner should appear. These two fundamental prophecies of the premessianic time are united moreover by the same refrain: 'Before the great and terrible Day of the Lord come' (Mal. $4^5$; Joel $2^{31}$). The Forerunner without miracles in an unmiraculous age was therefore unthinkable.

For the contemporaries, the characteristic difference between John and Jesus consisted precisely in the fact that the one simply pointed to the nearness of the Kingdom of God, whereas the other confirmed his preaching by signs and wonders. One had the feeling of entering with Jesus into the age of miracles. He was the Baptist over again—but the Baptist translated into the supernatural. After the mission of the Twelve, when Jesus' fame was spread abroad along with the news of the Baptist's death, the people said that the Baptist was raised from the dead. Hence at Caesarea Philippi his disciples reported that men took him for Elijah or for John the Baptist (Mk $8^{28}$). Herod when he heard of him insisted that he was the Baptist: 'John the Baptist has risen from the dead, that is why miraculous powers are working through him' (Mk $6^{14}$).

4. *Victory over Demons a Sign of the Kingdom.*

Jesus conceived that his miracles ought to be taken as signs of the nearness of the Kingdom of God—and that was another reason for his hearers to suppose that they were entering with him into the era of the Forerunner. But one of the wonders he performed was more than a sign of the nearness of the Kingdom in time. By his victory over demons he was confident that he was doing something to

bring it about. (*The rest of this section I can omit because it refers to matters we have already considered at sufficient length.*)

5. *Jesus and the Baptist.*

We have seen above that no one could recognize Elijah in the person of John the Baptist because his ministry and preaching without miracles did not conform with the Scriptural representation of the epoch of the Forerunner. No one thought of ascribing to him this office and dignity except—for there was one exception—*Jesus*! It was he who first gave the people a mysterious hint that this man was the Forerunner: 'If you are able to receive it, he himself is Elijah, the Coming One' (Mt $11^{14}$). He is aware, however, that this utterance must remain an incomprehensible secret to his hearers, as obscure as the word uttered in this connection about the men of violence who since the days of John the Baptist are using compulsion upon the Kingdom (Mt $11^{12}$), and so he concludes these two sayings with the oracular phrase, 'He who has an ear, let him listen' (Mt $11^{15}$).

The people, in fact, were very far from comprehending that this Baptist who had fallen into the hands of Herod could be the prodigious personality who was to stand upon the threshold of the Messianic age. So the mysterious word of Jesus died upon the air, and the people stuck to the opinion that John was simply a prophet (Mk $11^{32}$).

The rulers, too, could come to no conclusion about the character of the Baptist. Therefore they were worsted by Jesus when they challenged him for what he had done in the Temple.

The disciples were no better off. By themselves they were unable to recognize in John the expected Elijah. As they descended from the hill after the Transfiguration they were perplexed about the Messiahship of Jesus and about the resurrection of the dead which he had just referred to. This implied in fact the presence of the Messianic Kingdom, and this could not yet have dawned because 'Elijah must first come, as the Pharisees and scribes say' (Mk $9^{9-11}$). Thereupon Jesus replied to them that John was this Elijah, notwithstanding that he was delivered into the power of men (Mk $9^{12, 13}$).

How did Jesus reach the conviction that the Baptist was Elijah? Through a necessary inference from his own Messiahship. Because he knew himself to be the Messiah, John must be Elijah. Between these two there was of necessity a mutual correspondence. No one could know that the Baptist was Elijah except by inferring this from the Messiahship of Jesus. No one could hit upon the idea that the Baptist was Elijah without at the same time being obliged to see in Jesus the Messiah. For after the Forerunner there was no place for another figure of the same sort. Now no one knew that Jesus took himself for the Messiah. So people regarded John as a prophet and raised the question whether Jesus were not Elijah. No one understood in their full bearing the mysterious sentences with which Jesus concluded his eulogy of the Baptist. For Jesus alone John was the expected Elijah.

6. *The Baptist and Jesus.*

What was the Baptist's attitude towards Jesus? If he had been conscious of being the Forerunner, he must have surmised that Jesus was the Messiah. This is what one generally assumes, supposing that he as the Forerunner put to Jesus the question whether he might be the Messiah (Mt $11^{2-6}$). This assumption seems to us perfectly natural, because we always think of these two characters in the relation of Forerunner and Messiah.

But with this we forget a perfectly obvious question. Did the Baptist feel himself to be Elijah the Forerunner? Before the people he advanced no such claim in any of his utterances, and they persisted in regarding him simply as a prophet. Even during his imprisonment he can have claimed nothing of the sort, for in Jerusalem after his death the people had no notion that he had been anything but a prophet.

If somehow or another a presentiment had been felt that John represented Elijah, how could it have become the general opinion that John was a prophet and Jesus was Elijah? That this was the common view even after the death of the Baptist is proved by the reply of the disciples at Caesarea Philippi. To interpret the Baptist's query in conformity with the assumption that the Forerunner is

asking if Jesus is the Messiah is to view it in an unjustified perspective, for it cannot be proved that John held himself to be the Forerunner. So it is by no means made out that his question referred to the Messianic dignity. The bystanders, since they did not take John to be the Forerunner, must have understood it in a very different sense, namely, as a query whether he was Elijah.

This false perspective of ours leads us to ignore in this passage a striking detail—the fact, namely, that the very characterization which John employs in his question to Jesus is by Jesus employed in turn to describe John. 'Are you the Coming One?' asked John. Jesus, addressing the people, replied, 'If you are able to receive it, he *himself* is Elijah, the Coming One.' This designation, 'the Coming One,' is therefore common to both speeches—only we arbitrarily understand it of the Messiah in the question of John the Baptist. This is perfectly natural for us with our naïve perspective, but we must recognize that there is no justification for it so soon as we perceive that we are influenced only by our perspective and not by any objective standard. Properly read, the phrase 'he himself' suddenly acquires an unsuspected significance: '*He himself* is Elijah, the Coming One.' We are compelled by this to argue backward and recognize that in the question of the Baptist 'the Coming One' does not mean the Messiah, but (as in Jesus' reply) it is a description of Elijah.

'Are you the expected Forerunner?'—that is the question John sent his disciples to ask Jesus. 'If you are able to receive it, he himself is the Forerunner,' said Jesus to the people after he had spoken to them about the greatness of the Baptist.

This understanding of the scene gives it a far more intense colouring. First of all, it becomes clear why Jesus spoke about the Baptist after the departure of the messengers. He felt compelled to carry the people beyond the conception they had of John as a prophet (Mt 11[9]) and prompt them to rise by stages to the presentiment that he was the Forerunner, with whose appearance the hand of the world clock neared the fatal hour, who was indicated by prophecy as 'he that prepares the way,'

and of whom the scribes thought that he ' must first come ' (Mk $9^{11}$).

John, in fact, was slow in his reckoning of Messianic time. His messengers arrive at the moment when Jesus was most confident of the nearness of the Kingdom. He had sent forth his disciples and led them to understand that the manifestation of the Son of Man might surprise them while they were journeying through the cities of Israel. The hour is far more advanced—that is what, in his ' eulogy of the Baptist,' Jesus would give the people to understand, if they could comprehend it.

John had formed his opinion about Jesus in the same way that the people had come to their conclusion. It was when he heard of the signs and ' deeds ' of Jesus that he began to suspect that this prophet might be something more than a prophet ; and so he sent his messengers to him to inquire if this might be so.

This, however, puts the proclamation of the Baptist in an entirely different light. He did not point to the coming Messiah, but to the expected Forerunner. This is the sense of his prophecy about him who is to come after him (Mk $1^{7,8}$). As applied to the Messiah, the expressions he employs are obscure, for they denote only a difference in degree, not a total difference of kind, between himself and the person he announces. If he were speaking of the Messiah, it would be impossible for him to use expressions which, in spite of the mighty difference in rank which they imply, still compare the Coming One to himself. He thinks of the Forerunner as like himself,—baptizing and preaching repentance, but incomparably greater and mightier. Instead of baptizing with water he will baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mk $1^{8}$).

This cannot apply to the Messiah. Since when does the Messiah baptize ? Then, too, the famous outpouring of the Spirit does not occur within but before the Messianic age. Before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the Lord he will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, and signs and wonders shall be showed in heaven and on earth (Joel $2^{28ff.}$). Before the coming of the great Day of the Lord he will send Elijah the prophet (Mal. $4^{5}$). The Baptist, combining these two chief indications of the character of the great events

which are to precede the Last Times, forms a conception of the Forerunner who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit. One may perceive from this what a supernatural light surrounded the Forerunner in the popular conception. Therefore John felt himself so little before him.

By this question of John's Jesus was put in a difficult position. The Baptist in asking him, Are you the Forerunner, or are you not, proposed a false alternative, to which he could answer neither yes nor no. He was not willing to entrust the secret of his Messiahship to the messengers, and therefore he replied with a hint that the nearness of the Kingdom might be inferred from his deeds. At the same time he thrust his own person strikingly into the foreground. He alone can be blessed who stands up for him and finds in him no stumbling-block. This means the same thing as his declaration to the people (Mk $8^{38}$), that membership in the Kingdom depends upon a man's constancy and fidelity to him.

Jesus' remarkable, evasive answer to the Baptist, in which exegesis has always supposed there was hidden a special finesse, is seen to be simply due to the tight fix in which he found himself. He could not answer directly: therefore he gave this obscure response. The Baptist was to gather from it what he would and could. Besides, it was of no great importance how he understood it. Events would soon teach him, for the hour is much further advanced than he supposes, and the hammer is already lifted to strike the hour.

It is exceedingly difficult for us to get rid of the notion that the Baptist and Jesus stood to one another in the relation of Forerunner and Messiah. It requires a tense effort of reflection to perceive that in our perspective these two personalities stand in this relation because we assume the Messiahship of Jesus, and that we must take into account the right perspective in order to discover their historical relationship.

So long as one is still prejudiced in any degree by the old perspective, he cannot do justice to the foregoing argument. One may have then the notion that it is a question of ' the Forerunner of the Forerunner ' and the Forerunner—which is only an ingenious multiplication of the Forerunner by

himself. That is falsely expressed. A prophet of repentance, John the Baptist, fixes men's expectation upon the mighty figure of Elijah the Forerunner, and when he hears in prison of the works of Jesus he wonders if this may not be Elijah—and does not guess that this man holds himself to be the Messiah and that he himself will henceforth be designated in history as the Forerunner. This is the historical situation.

So soon, however, as men's view of this time was determined by the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, the historical situation was necessarily distorted. The Gospels reveal this distortion in increasing measure. In the introduction to St. Mark the verse from Malachi ($3^1$) about the Forerunner is already applied to John. According to Matthew the Baptist hears in prison about 'the works of the Messiah' (Mt $11^2$). This is simply a case of unconscious subjection to the influence of a new point of view. But the Fourth Gospel makes a principle of it, and consistently alters the history to match the presumption that because Jesus was the Messiah, John must have been the Forerunner and felt himself to be such. The historical Baptist says, I am not the Forerunner, for he is incomparably greater and mightier than I. According to the Fourth Gospel the people went so far as to conjecture that John was the Christ. He was obliged therefore to affirm, 'I am not the Christ' (Jn $1^{20}$).

So under the influence of the new perspective the relation between John and Jesus was completely distorted. The person of the Baptist has become historically unrecognizable. Finally they have made out of him the modern doubter, who half believes and half disbelieves in Jesus' Messiahship. In this apprehensive indecision, this backing and filling, is supposed to lie the tragedy of his story. Now, however, we may confidently strike him from the list of those characters, so interesting to us moderns, who come to ruin through a tragic half-faith. Jesus spared him that; for so long as he lived he required of no one faith in him as the Messiah. And yet that is what he was!

I count it impertinent to inquire whether anyone could better express what is said in this long quotation, for

Schweitzer's expression must always remain classical, inasmuch as he first said what is here set forth. And I think that it is not superfluous to cite this passage verbatim, here at this point where we are grappling with the central problem of Gospel history; for, important as this passage is, I cannot assume that it is known to the reader. Neither do I find fault with Schweitzer for being 'thoroughgoing' in his eschatology. In writing his 'Sketch' the new points he makes would have been less telling if they had been less sharply expressed. Nevertheless, as I have been translating this passage again with reference to its application *here* in the midst of a detailed study of Jesus' character and teaching, I could not but feel that Schweitzer himself must have softened his expressions, if he had been writing a life of Jesus. In fact, I have taken the liberty of softening some of them in the translation. For Schweitzer's 'Sketch' is professedly an outline drawing designed to throw into relief the neglected eschatological traits of the Gospel story; and if for a moment we forget that it is not meant to be a full and fair characterization of Jesus, it may easily appear to be a caricature. It may easily suggest that Jesus was a victim of an *idée fixe*, that he was so obsessed by the apocalyptic programme that there was no room in his head for anything else. But that is precisely what the Gospels do not permit us to believe. In none of them is the apocalyptic element so prominent that all students are compelled to recognize it as fundamental. It would hardly have been discovered, or rediscovered, without the aid of the 'eschatological school.' And the *memorabilia* of Jesus depict a man who had an amazingly just awareness of his environment, and reacted to it not only promptly but appropriately. He displayed a compassionate interest in the immediate physical woes of men. And although he proclaimed the nearness of God's Reign, he prescribed to his disciples conduct becoming to this present age (*interimsethik*). This I feel more strongly now than when I wrote something to the same effect in an Introduction to Schweitzer's book. And I feel now that there is not sufficient justification for attributing to Jesus a *deluded* expectation of the coming of the Kingdom. Doubtless he felt that God's Reign was near—imminent, impending

—and it was thus he proclaimed it. But against the notion that he fixed his hope upon a certain date, and was disappointed, stands the fact of his reticence about the Last Things, and particularly his declaration (Mk $13^{22}$, a ' pillar passage '), ' But about that day or hour no one knows anything, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son, but only the Father.' And the sense that Jesus had of the nearness of God's Reign seems to me to indicate above all a sense of God and a sense of God's nearness—not as the mystics mean it, minimizing the difference between God and the creation (an essential distance), but as a presentiment of the eternal in the temporal. It is clearly true that the apocalyptic element is more prominent in the earliest than in the later Gospels. That seems to indicate a *tendency* to obliterate this trait from the tradition, and it is possible that such a tendency was already operative in St. Mark's Gospel. Schweitzer accordingly assumes that we are bound to magnify every eschatological trait discoverable in this Gospel. But in reality we have no criterion to determine how far we ought to go in this direction. And, on the other hand, we cannot reasonably ignore another consideration which points in the opposite direction. Analogies familiar to us in modern adventist enthusiasms suggest that the crowds which thronged about Jesus may have been moved by his proclamation to picture, with a perfervid imagination, more than he suggested, and that their enthusiasm may have coloured too highly the tradition of his declarations.

¶ 42. Seeking Retirement.

Mk $6^{30-32}$. **And the disciples gathered together about Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught.** $^{31}$ **Then he said to them, ' Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest awhile.' For there were many people coming and going, so that they had no leisure even to eat.** $^{32}$ **So by themselves they set off in the boat to go to a secluded place.**

Only this scanty vestige is left of an original tradition which indicated that *here* was the point where Jesus left Galilee for good. Yet this short paragraph would suffice for such indication, if in the text that follows Jesus were actually

seen to be leaving. That impression is now hopelessly obscured by the fact that St. Mark has incorporated in his text two parallel accounts of this critical period of Jesus' life, which he was not content to compare with one another, but joined together end to end. The consequence is that, following this intimation of Jesus' departure, we have eleven paragraphs, six belonging to one series and five to the other, which duplicate the events of this short period and create hopeless confusion. Perhaps this process has thrown each series somewhat into disarray. At all events, from St. Mark's text as it now stands no one could get the impression that the passage we have now under consideration intimates a definite departure from Galilee. For the time that he lingers, or seems to linger, about the lake of Galilee is unduly prolonged, and his journeyings when they are duplicated seem to be aimless. The duplication does not stop with the two stories of the feeding of the multitude. For each of these accounts is followed by a voyage on the lake, an unexplained return to the neighbourhood of Capernaum, a conflict there with the Pharisees, another departure on foot for a region more remote than was reached before (Tyre—Caesarea Philippi), and by a novel method of healing. The first series is relatively the more complete ; but it is plausible to suppose that in the process of amalgamation stories which were more obviously a repetition may have been dropped from the second series. We cannot now discern whether this amalgamation was first wrought by Mark or was found by him already carried out in the written or oral source which he relied upon. One thing we can be sure of, that Peter's reminiscences were not Mark's authority for this part of his story. We can detect the hand of the editor in the slight touches which are meant to justify the repetition of the feeding of the multitude. 'When there was *again* a great multitude,' the second account begins ($8^{1}$) ; and later ($8^{19-21}$), 'Do you not remember . . . when I broke the five loaves . . . and when I broke the seven.' The editor riveted the two narratives together by these remarks, but he did nothing to cover over the incongruity of the Apostles' incredulous surprise ($8^{4}$) when for *a second time* they were told to provide food for so many people. It was

as though the first miracle had never been performed. It was a substance which cast no shadow—had no effect, not even in memory.

So we have two parallel accounts of an important period of Jesus' life. Anywhere else in the Gospel such a duplication might be only a regrettable redundancy—here it is a deplorable disaster. For this period, though it is doubtless not the most important of Jesus' life, is the most critical for our understanding of it. And here we are left in the lurch.

Schweitzer remarks that these two cycles seem foreordained to be joined together end to end. For it happens that each of the northern journeys begins and ends with a visit to Galilee : Mk $7^{31}$, ' He left the region of Tyre and passed through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee ' ; $9^{30, 33}$, ' On leaving there (the region of Caesarea Philippi) they passed through Galilee and arrived at Capernaum.' At the end of one narrative series we find ourselves at the same point where the other began. Hence the one return from the north can be connected with the beginning of the other series, and, superficially viewed, forms a perfectly natural continuation—only by this arrangement we are surprised to find that Jesus has to start back again immediately for the north, instead of pursuing his way through Galilee to Jerusalem, as the original tradition intended. But this observation is far from making it intelligible how St. Mark (or his traditional source) could have failed to detect that these two series are parallel. Even now, one who feels free to criticize St. Mark's text cannot fail to detect this duplication, and experiences no difficulty in eliminating the doublets. This can be roughly accomplished by sacrificing the whole of the second series ($8^{1-26}$). But that of itself does not help us to a profounder understanding of the situation—as the critical treatment of this Gospel shows. Luke did that and more too, yet he did not gain a perception of the significance of this period. He was critical enough to perceive that Mark had made (or registered) a blunder, and he felt quite free to remedy this defect in a text which he did not regard as sacrosanct, though it was his main reliance for all that concerns the *story* of Jesus' life. With the intention of

jumping over the second series he stepped back too far and passed over a large part of the first series. He thus omits nine paragraphs—everything that is included between Mk 6[45] and 8[26]—and having then no reference left to a journey northward, he feels obliged to suppress the statement that the scene of Peter's confession was in the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi. For the same reason he has no definite date for the start toward Jerusalem (*cp.* Lk 13[33], 17[11], 18[31]), and therefore into this gap which St. Mark's confusion had created and his criticism had indefinitely enlarged he dumps almost all the additional matter pertaining to Jesus' teaching by which he enriches Mark's sober account. This new matter amounts to one-third of St. Luke's whole Gospel, and, in the place where he puts it, it implies a long protraction of Jesus' stay in Galilee, for it was only there such teaching could have been given. Not till he reaches the story of Jesus blessing the children (Lk 18[15]) does Luke begin again to follow Mark's order closely, and from that point on he follows it steadily to the end. It is significant that this is the point (or not far beyond it) where Mark's narrative regains its clarity and consistency.

Matthew does not venture upon a wholesale criticism of Mark, so he effects no improvement in the situation. John follows Luke in suppressing the second feeding of the multitude, but of course does nothing to clarify the historical situation. This confusion and obscurity in the Synoptic account is the opportunity for every wild interpretation. The suppression of a definite date for a definitive departure from Galilee renders it possible to prolong indefinitely the period of Jesus' public activity, even to the three year term suggested by St. John's three Passovers at Jerusalem. The journey to the north, if it has not disappeared altogether, has left such scant traces that we are not disposed to count it of any importance, or to ask what reasons may have prompted it. The answer to that question can be conjectured, but it can be no more than a conjecture, because the Evangelists do not disclose it, and the Apostles themselves presumably did not know the reasons (or all the reasons) which prompted Jesus to journey into pagan

territory and pass so long a time in obscurity. With regard to the journey up to Jerusalem we are in a very different position. *That* we cannot treat lightly, seeing that it ended in the tragedy which stamped upon Christianity for ever its express and peculiar character, giving it the Cross as its distinctive symbol. Contemplating that fatal journey, we cannot forbear to ask the question, Why ? To that question the Apostles knew the answer, because Jesus revealed it to them : he went to Jerusalem to die—as the Gospels plainly enough report. But because of another confusion in St. Mark's text, which we shall soon be studying under section 7 (pp. 306–310), it is possible to ignore or to discard this report ; and the authors of all the liberal ' Lives of Jesus ' have preferred a reason which is *not* given in the Gospels. Assuming (in flattest contradiction to the facts) that Jesus found himself compelled to leave Galilee because of his waning popularity and the growth of influential opposition, they like to believe that he undertook the journey to Jerusalem in the hope that there he might be better received and his Messianic claim be accepted !

Having now said so much by way of preface—an excursion in literary criticism which serves as an introduction to the long section of St. Mark's Gospel which is included between $6^{30}$ and $8^{26}$—I can now turn to a more particular comment upon the text which immediately concerns us here ($6^{30-32}$).

Only the first of these two parallel series has a preface. We may suppose that the second series was originally provided with one, and it is easy to understand why it was omitted when the two series were combined. A preface is obviously very necessary here to explain why Jesus started away from Galilee, and how it was that he found a great crowd awaiting him when he landed at the north end of the lake. The information we are given here is scanty, but because we have nothing else to guide us we must all the more value these few words. St. Luke, because he did not conceive that Jesus was departing definitely from Galilee, omitted the preface altogether. St. Matthew abbreviated it by omitting the reason for this new start.

We must confess that this preface does not explain how

the people contrived to learn where Jesus was going, or how they succeeded in getting there before him, in spite of the fact that they went on foot, while he arrived by a shorter course in the boat. We are left pretty much to our own conjectures. But at least it is evident from the text that most of the immense crowd did not come from so far away as Capernaum, and it is not necessary to suppose that all got to the spot before Jesus. They may have kept pouring in for a long time after his arrival. The second account of the feeding of the multitude ($8^{2}$) states that they remained three days with Jesus before he dismissed them with the farewell supper. Verse 33 belongs as much to the preface as to the paragraph which follows: 'However, many people saw them leaving and recognized them and hurried on foot from all the villages and got ahead of them. So when he got out of the boat he saw a large crowd.' One thing is evident from this account, if we can trust it at all: this unprecedented chase after Jesus implies that the people were aware that he had made up his mind to leave Galilee and was then trying to escape from them.

Verse 31 suggests a reason which was adequate enough to determine at least a temporary departure, though perhaps it was not the whole reason. 'Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest awhile.' Wellhausen makes the supercilious comment that, if the disciples were weary after their mission, Jesus adopted a strange way of giving them a rest when he made them row to the other end of the lake. It is as though the critic did not know how restful may be an accustomed exercise. Foot-weary from their mission, the disciples might still have been strong at the oars. He seems even not to know the imperious necessity of solitude. That is what the Apostles would most be needing after their mission, and the text makes it plain that they could not expect to enjoy it in Capernaum, 'For there were many people coming and going, so that they had no leisure even to eat.' It is not unlikely that Jesus was more in need of rest than were his disciples, and more particularly of solitude. It may be that this was at first the whole reason, so far as he was conscious of it, for Jesus' desire to leave Galilee, and he may not have intended to go further

than the familiar region of the lake, until he had proof that solitude was not to be found there—and until a new event (the Transfiguration) made his need of it more imperative. If the Baptist's death was an expressive signal for Jesus, it could only be a signal for his own martyrdom. The Baptist's imprisonment was the signal for Jesus to step out and be a preacher in his place. Now, if he must still follow the Forerunner, it can only be by martyrdom. That surely gave him something to think about—reason enough for leaving Galilee and seeking solitude! Besides, we have reason to believe that Jesus felt more the need of solitude than most men do. He needed it not only as an escape from people, but as opportunity to think things out. After his baptism he had a sense of being 'driven' into the wilderness (1[12]). After the first exciting days of his public ministry he got up early one morning, long before daylight, and went by himself to a lonely spot (1[35]). After that he was always surrounded by a crowd, and he devoted himself so generously to their interests that we are tempted to believe he liked it and thoroughly enjoyed his popularity. But he himself explained that he was moved to do and endure all this as a duty—'For this is why I came out' (1[39]). But there was a limit to his endurance. 'He knew what was in men,' St. John says, and was not greatly charmed by their company—not even by their adulation. He had had enough of them, and commiseration was the sentiment which kept him among them. We have a proof that the journey to the north end of the lake was prompted by Jesus' own need of being alone; for there he sent his disciples away and went up the hill to pass the night alone in prayer (6[45, 46]). Soon after that he was moved by a special provocation to give loud expression to his feeling: 'O faithless generation, how long must I still be with you, how long have I to bear with you?' (9[19]).

Wellhausen's three short commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels have a striking advantage over all the others (including this commentary of mine) that they do not explain too much. I have a feeling that they might have been the best commentaries ever written on the Gospels, had they not been written so superciliously. Especially

his comments upon this portion of St. Mark's Gospel make a painful impression. It is as though he were petulant at seeing so much confusion, and hopeless of finding any firm consistency on which to build. One might have expected that the critical mind which had succeeded in reconstructing the Pentateuch might have done something constructive here. But a supercilious and petulant criticism cannot construct anything. Without faith in the documents one handles one will not even essay to build. And beside that, Wellhausen's determination to discount or eliminate all the eschatological features of his text has left him without any clue to the interpretation of this obscurest portion of the Gospel.

We need only remark further about this short passage that 'disciples' is the word used here and through both parallel cycles, instead of the 'Twelve' or the 'Apostles.' It was the 'Apostles' Jesus sent out on the mission, but it was the 'disciples' who rejoined him. Evidently it is the Twelve that are meant here.

We shall seek later an answer to the question where was the solitary place they set out to reach.

¶¶ 43, 49. Feeding the Multitude.

¶ 43. Mk $6^{33-44}$. **However, many people saw them leaving and hurried on foot from all the villages and got ahead of them. 34 So when he got out he saw a large crowd, and his heart was touched by them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he proceeded to teach them many things. 35 Then as it grew late his disciples came up to him and said, 'This is a solitary place, and it is getting late. 36 Dismiss the people so that they may go about to the farms and**

¶ 49. Mk $8^{1-9a}$. **In those days when a great crowd had gathered again and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, 2 'I pity the crowd, for they have been three days with me now and have nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them home without food, they will faint by the way, and some of them have come from far off.' 4 And his disciples said, 'Where can anyone get bread to satisfy their hunger in a desert spot like this?' 5 And he asked them,**

villages to buy themselves something to eat.' [37] But he replied, 'Give them some food yourselves.' And they said to him, 'Are we to go out and buy forty dollars worth of bread and give them that to eat?' [38] But he said to them, 'How many loaves have you? Go and see.' And when they had found out they told him, 'Five, and two fish.' [39] Then he gave orders to them that all the people were to lie down in parties on the green grass. [40] And they threw themselves down in groups of a hundred and of fifty. [41] Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, and, looking up to heaven, he said the blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before them, and divided the two fish among them all. [42] And they all ate and were filled, [43] and the fragments which were picked up (including the fish) filled twelve baskets. [44] And the number of men who ate the loaves was five thousand.

'How many loaves have you?' And they said, 'Seven.' [6] So he ordered the crowd to recline on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and gave thanks and broke them and gave them to his disciples and said that they should be passed. And they passed them to the crowd. [7] And they had a few fish, and he blessed them and said that they also should be passed. [8] And they ate and satisfied their hunger, and they picked up seven baskets of fragments left over. [9] There were about four thousand people.

Once we have recognized the fact that we are dealing here with a series of doublets, the necessity is evident that we should print them side by side and comment upon them together.

St. Mark has taken no pains to make it clear to us where Jesus betook himself with his disciples in order to be alone. St. Luke says ($9^{10}$), 'to a city called Bethsaida'—and that

is evidently not far wrong, for it was to Bethsaida he sent the disciples after the feeding of the multitude, while he remained behind to dismiss the crowd. As he obviously intended to follow them on foot, and after nightfall, the solitary place where he first landed could not have been very far away from Bethsaida. It is commonly understood that Bethsaida was at the north end of the lake, beyond (that is, to the west of) the place where the Jordan enters it. 'To cross' to it does not necessarily imply more than going by water to another place on the coast.

How great was the crowd? That is a question we cannot help asking when we have parallel traditions which disagree. Were there 'five thousand' or 'four thousand' men? or is even the smaller figure exaggerated? Inasmuch as both traditions regard this event as a miraculous multiplication of loaves and fish, the temptation to exaggerate was strong, for the greatness of the miracle was measured by the number of persons who were fed to satiety. But it is evident in any case that the Evangelist regarded this as the greatest multitude that had ever collected about Jesus. And the occasion must indeed have been extraordinary and significant or it hardly would have become the subject of legend.

I cannot wonder that thousands of people gave chase to Jesus and sought to detain him when it was rumoured abroad that he was seeking to escape from Galilee. Jesus had fanned into flame the smouldering embers of apocalyptic enthusiasm, which more than once before had broken out into violent conflagration. The ideas which he dealt with were familiar to all, and it was believed that they could be traced back to the great prophets. John had proclaimed the nearness of this long-expected Reign of God, and many had repented, believing John to be a prophet. Jesus proclaimed the same message, but his preaching was accompanied by miracles, and people suspected that he was Elijah, the Coming One. Therefore they were roused to a high pitch of expectation—not so much by what Jesus expressly said as by what they imagined him to mean and imagined him to be. The tradition represents that Jesus was reticent about the Last Things. He called upon men to repent in view of the approaching day. Instead, the

people rioted in the imagination of the coming Kingdom. So did even the Twelve after the disclosure of Jesus' Messiahship. When so celebrated an historian as Eduard Meyer stoops to study Mormonism because he thinks it furnishes an illuminating analogy to the development of the early Church, I may be permitted to refer to modern instances of adventist enthusiasms which have drawn multitudes out into the wilderness to await the end of the world in their resurrection garments. These very modern and American analogies make it exceedingly plausible to believe that the excited people who mistook Jesus for Elijah must have mistaken also the intent of his sayings and coloured the tradition of them. And how were these poor people to face the coming crisis without their Elijah? And Elijah threatened to desert them! Therein lies the significance of the saying 'they were like sheep without a shepherd.' There is the pathos of it. Sheep without a shepherd—so they must have thought of themselves as they hurried after Jesus. And hence Jesus' compassion. He did not repel them, nor try to make his escape again by boat. He lingered with them and 'taught them many things.'

How long did he linger with them? We would hardly raise that question here, did not the second tradition ($8^{2}$) mention a period of 'three days.' That is a datum which is not plausible in this context, where nothing is told that suggests to our imagination how so many days were occupied. For that reason it is the more worthy of attention, for as it was clearly not invented to suit this passage, it may be reminiscent of a reliable tradition. Luke says ($9^{11}$) that on this occasion Jesus not only taught the people but 'healed those who were in need of healing.' He needed no independent tradition for that assertion. Jesus had always been healing people, and it seemed natural to suppose that he was doing it here. It is in fact so natural that we cannot lightly reject this addition to Mark's account. And in fact Mark does give an account of an extraordinary case of healing ($9^{14-29}$) which, as we shall see later, was really performed in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida, and Jesus himself speaks (Mt $11^{21}$; Lk $10^{13}$) of the 'mighty works' which he did in Bethsaida. We shall find later (p. 309)

reason to believe that the Transfiguration took place in this same region; and as that story is introduced by the observation that it occurred 'after six days,' we must conclude that Jesus lingered near Bethsaida for more than a week.

At all events, the supper *al fresco* on the shore of the lake was the impressive termination of one of these days. The first account puts it at the end of the first day, and on account of the confusion of the subsequent narrative we get the impression that it marks the end of Jesus' visit in those parts. But Jesus' effort to dismiss the multitude instead of fleeing from them denotes his intention to remain at Bethsaida with the hope of enjoying there the solitude he had come to find. Accordingly it was to Bethsaida he sent his disciples, meaning to follow them on foot when he had succeeded in sending the people away. We can readily conjecture that this was not an easy task. And, in fact, Jesus did not succeed in it. We shall find the multitude surrounding him again. A shepherd might flee from his flock, but he is powerless to drive his sheep away from him. Jesus clearly understood this difficulty, and therefore he sent his disciples away first, hoping that when he was alone with the people he might be able to persuade them to return to their homes. In fact, the multitude remained, and it was he that took leave of them ($6^{46}$). He retired up the hill and passed the night in solitary prayer.

All that day he had 'taught them many things.' The expression is unusual and may be significant, but what it was he taught them Mark does not tell us. Luke ($9^{11}$) says that he 'spoke about the Kingdom of God.' Of course—that was an obvious thing to say, but it does not tell us what we want to know. Did he simply proclaim the nearness of the Kingdom, as he had done since the first days at Capernaum? That would have been superfluous teaching for this excited multitude. To excite their expectation still further would not be a way of dismissing them. At that moment the people were in need of a different sort of teaching—something that would check their enthusiasm. And St. Mark's account reveals the fact that at this time a new note emerged in Jesus' teaching. It was the intima-

tion of the necessity of suffering for the sake of the Kingdom of God. That was a thought well calculated to quench the perfervid enthusiasm of the crowd. It seems to have been for Jesus himself a new apprehension, and we can conceive that it might well have been prompted by the martyrdom of the Baptist. It is a striking fact that the thought of suffering first emerges in the discourses of Jesus, not as an intimation of the fate reserved for the Messiah, but as a warning to his followers to be prepared for the hardship and suffering they may be called upon to endure. John the Baptist was the first to suffer, as he was the first to contend for the Kingdom of God. But from his days 'until now the Kingdom of heaven is attacked with violence, and the violent are taking it by storm' (Mt $11^{12}$). Jesus is the leader of this band of heroes, and as such he will have to bear the brunt of the conflict. But who can tell what sufferings his companions may have to endure and how many of them may be called upon to sacrifice their lives? St. John's beautiful allegory of the Good Shepherd does not reflect Jesus' expectation at this time. 'The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep'—and thereby the sheep are spared this sacrifice. Up to the last moment, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus contemplated the possibility that at least his most intimate disciples (the Three) might be faced by the same temptation that he was meeting (Mk $14^{38}$). But here I am anticipating the outcome of an excursus in literary criticism (pp. 306ff) which assigns to the days in Bethsaida the discourse recorded in Mk $8^{34}$–$9^{1}$.

But Jesus' commiseration for these sheep without a shepherd was not expressed merely by teaching them, by healing their diseases, and by satisfying their bodily hunger. If he had meant the mission of the Twelve to be a farewell gesture to Galilee, he was here offered another occasion for saying good-bye to his Galileans who had followed him in such prodigious numbers beyond the borders of their country. And with characteristic grace he took advantage of this occasion to make a more beautiful gesture of farewell —more personal and more comforting than the last— worthy to be held in everlasting remembrance. He gave

them one hearty meal and . . . the surprise of their lives! That is all the *miracle* amounts to. But what Jesus actually did was immeasurably more impressive than that. 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life' (Jn $6^{27}$). This is what Jesus would have said *before* (and instead of) performing such a miracle. For there was no tragic necessity. The practically minded disciples suggested that as evening was coming on it was time to 'dismiss the people so that they may go about to the farms and villages to buy themselves something to eat.' The situation was no more serious than that. The disciples reckoned that if they were to go and buy the food themselves, they could do it all for forty dollars. It is true they did not have so much money. But we can hardly think that this was a price sufficient to compel Jesus to break his rule and perform a wonder which every one must accept as proof of superhuman power. When his enemies demanded of him a 'sign from heaven' they could hardly mean a more astounding miracle than the sheer creation of an immense quantity of bread and fish. Mk $8^{11, 12}$ implies that no such prodigious miracle had yet been wrought—and that none ever would be wrought by the hand of Jesus.

What actually happened is, up to a certain point, related soberly enough in the Gospel narrative—up to the point, namely, where it is affirmed that 'they were filled.' A favourite rationalistic interpretation (adopted by Phillips Brooks) explained the fragments which filled so many baskets by assuming that very many people in the company had with them an ample supply of provisions, which they concealed—until Jesus' generous gesture prompted them to share what they had with others. The miracle was that so many people sat down together in peace and shared what they had with their neighbours. Having my choice, I would far rather sacrifice the baskets. For it is essential that Jesus should be the host in this picture, and the only host.

In both traditions it is implied that Jesus proposed to feed all the people with such provisions as his disciples had brought along for their own consumption. A surprisingly

scanty *viaticum* this turns out to be. Whether there were five loaves and two smoked fish or seven loaves and a few fish, the provision was hardly sufficient for Jesus and the Twelve. Coarse food, too. St. John says they were barley loaves. Only too likely. On such coarse diet as this Jesus commonly subsisted—and for that he gave thanks to his Father in heaven!

Wellhausen justly regards this as an idyllic scene: 'The friendly picture of a beautiful evening in a lonely spot by the lake, the crowd lying in groups on the green grass, and the disciples passing back and forth between them to deal out bread and fish.' It was all of that—but it was very much more. With the utmost solemnity Jesus played the part of host. He gave orders that all the people were to recline (as for a banquet) in groups upon the green grass. Then he took the loaves and the fish, and (as gravely as any altar ministrant) he looked up to heaven (oh, most religious man!) and uttered aloud the ritual blessing. Finally, before the eyes of all, he broke the loaves, thus symbolizing that they were to be shared. The action was doubtless sublime—yet it must at the same time have been ridiculous . . . if that was all. So much prolusion and display about such a pitiful quantity of bread which must serve as a festal banquet for so many people!

But that was not all. It was not even all that could be comprehended by the people. I have not exaggerated here the solemnity of Jesus' gestures. It may be said that it was a matter of course for every Jew to say a blessing for the food he was about to eat. (If it was the size of an olive, some rabbis contended—others said, the size of an egg.) But what was so much a matter of course would hardly have been mentioned here, if there had not been something peculiarly impressive in Jesus' way of giving thanks. A loaf, it is said, has to be broken in order to be distributed. This again is a matter of course. Therefore it is natural that in the whole of Jewish literature (according to Dalmann) there is no mention made of this obvious part of the duty of a host. Why, then, was this common act so specially remarked upon in the case of Jesus, both here and at the Last Supper? How could this common act be

regarded as a distinguishing characteristic of Jesus (Lk $24^{35}$), so that in remembrance of him it must be repeated at every Eucharist? As a matter of fact, the phrase, 'to break bread,' or 'the breaking of bread,' has never been used in the Church except with solemn reference to this custom of Jesus (Acts $2^{42, 46}$, $20^{7, 11}$, $27^{35}$; 1 Cor. $10^{16}$, $11^{24}$). How is this?—unless Jesus, by the solemnity of his gesture, imparted to this act a peculiar significance: that the loaf is made to be shared—and that all who communicate in the same bread are in effect united with one another.

This scene was in reality much more than a gracious earthly idyll of contentment and goodwill. There was a glamour about it that was not shed by the slanting rays of the declining sun—that was not of the moonlight either, nor of the starlight. A celestial radiance was shed abroad over that expectant multitude. In that moment of enthusiasm they felt as if they were already 'seeing the things which are invisible.' It was to that mood Jesus responded. He did not need to respond to their physical appetite, which at that moment they themselves could not feel. But to their deep feeling of religious awe he responded with a religious action. His tone and gesture could not be too religious for such an occasion. He invited them to a sacral banquet. And they understood his gesture.

The blessing at meals was originally connected with the sacrificial banquet. 1 Sam. $9^{13}$ is the earliest reference to it in the Old Testament. That indeed was an association too remote to shed any light upon this occasion. But the people with whom Jesus was dealing were acquainted with the notion of the cultus meal, the sacral banquet. It was one of the religious practices, most broadly characteristic of that age, throughout the Roman Empire; and even if it was not in common use among the Jews, it must have been familiar to them. Therefore this enthusiastic company which had followed Jesus along the shore of the lake were not disturbed by the thought that they were doing anything ridiculous when they reclined on the grass as if for a banquet and received from the disciples mere particles of bread. They may have had only a vague idea about what was being accomplished by this sacred meal, but they were sure

it was something very serious and very solemn. They were eating now with this great prophet—was he perhaps Elijah ? and might this be a foretaste of the celestial banquet they would soon share with him in the Kingdom of God ? So much as this they understood or guessed. The thoughts suggested to them were stern as well as comforting. They were pledged henceforth to stand by the prophet in the impending crisis, even at the cost of their lives. That was the new thought which Jesus had just been imparting to them. On the other hand, he was pledged to intervene on their behalf with the Son of Man.

But Jesus himself meant much more than that—and was not in the least concerned at the reflection that the people could not understand all that he had in his mind. They could not understand that he who was their host here would be found to be their host (not a fellow-guest) at the heavenly banquet—for he was himself the Son of Man. They did not need to understand that. For Jesus was conscious of performing a sacrament. It was a sacrament in the strictest sense of the word, and therefore was effective *ex opere operato*. It did not need to be understood. We have more than one way of overthrowing the nature of a sacrament. We can do it by professing that the thing received is the very selfsame thing that it signifies. And we can do it by professing that the thing received is merely a symbol of the thing signified. And indeed it is only when sacraments are eschatologically conceived that they are free from either of these implications and from every sort of equivocation. This that Jesus then performed was an eschatological sacrament. The symbolical banquet which he improvised on the lake shore gave to him the comforting assurance that all who were his guest-friends here would hereafter find entrance into his Father's Kingdom. The men who partook of this sacrament were not in like manner consciously assured, for they did not fully understand the purport of what was being done ; but their future blessedness was not, by reason of this defect of understanding, one whit less effectively ensured. It is only moral defect—defect of faith, faithfulness, and courage—that can disappoint the expectation prompted by the sacrament.

The Church has the character of a sacramental religion —not accidentally, not by the intrusion of foreign elements borrowed from the pagan mysteries, but because Jesus himself impressed that stamp upon it. And we need not marvel at that, for sacraments naturally go along with apocalyptic eschatology. The only apocalypse in the New Testament presents us with examples enough. The ' hidden manna ' and the ' white stone on which a new name is written ' (Rev. $2^{17}$) are given to the faithful combatant in life's battle, not as his reward, but as a pledge of it. To the same effect ' a hundred and forty and four thousand have his Father's name written on their foreheads ' (Rev. $14^{1}$). This is the number that is said to be ' sealed ' out of all the tribes of the children of Israel, and besides them there were sealed ' a great number which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues ' (Rev. $7^{3-9}$). This sufficiently illustrates the nature of an eschatological sacrament. The man who held in his hand the mysterious white stone was not made a different man by that gift, he received no new increment of inward and spiritual grace, but he was assured of a place in the Kingdom of God. The multitude who were sealed were not phenomenally changed by that sacrament—a psychological test would discover no alteration in their souls—but their relation to God was changed, existentially they were ' translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son.' St. Paul was a thoroughgoing eschatologist. Therefore he says (Rom. $8^{24}$), ' By hope we are saved. But a hope that is seen is not hope. If a man sees a thing, how can he also hope for it ? ' It will likely be agreed that the baptism of John was just such an eschatological sacrament. But it is not for this reason an ineffectual sacrament. John evidently regarded it as an effective refuge from the wrath to come. Otherwise he would not have been so indignant with the Pharisees and Sadducees (' generation of vipers ') who baptized themselves in his presence and thus thought to escape the punishment they deserved (Mt $3^{7}$). We are not to suppose that John meant to disparage his baptism as an empty symbolical rite when he compared it with the baptism the Coming One was to

administer, calling that a baptism with the Holy Spirit—that is, the outpouring of the Spirit which Joel prophesied as a sign of the last days. Was that outpouring (as we like to think of it) a surrogate for the Kingdom of God? Or was that too (that is to say, is Christian baptism) proleptical—does it mean hoping for what we do not see, and therefore with patience waiting for it—prophesying, seeing visions, dreaming dreams (Joel $2^{28}$)? Do we find it intolerable to admit that in baptism we are dealing with mere water (not transformed into the blood of Christ), and with mere man (not transformed into an angel)? To our senses it is evident that the baptized child is the same screaming child and that the baptized man is the same bad man—all-too-human—and we cannot think it likely that the analytical psychologist would discover any slightest change in child or man, any indication of infused grace. We might as well expect the chemist to detect a change in the water used for baptism. So, then, the sacrament of baptism accomplishes nothing in me—except that I am made a child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven—reborn, therefore, existentially, translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son. Is not that enough for us? No, we do not count it enough that we should be saved; we want also to be good (even if it is only by the infusion of another's goodness), so that at all events we shall be *worthy* of being saved. 'O wretched man that I am!' exclaimed St. Paul—long after his baptism, after feeding during many years upon the sacrament of the Eucharist; 'who shall deliver me from this body of death?' God will! 'I thank him through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. $7^{24, 25}$). Such was Paul's notion of sacramental grace (if his testimony is worth anything nowadays). He was modestly content to be saved—'by hope.' Though he remained during the days of his flesh just what he was (all-too-human), he was satisfied to know that his life was *hid* with Christ in God. He set his mind therefore on the things that are above, not on things as they are upon this earth. For he was well assured that this hidden life of his, though it was not phenomenally apparent here, not revealed even to himself in religious

'experience,' would nevertheless be plainly manifested in that day when Christ shall be manifested—'in glory' (Col. $3^{1-4}$).

This is enough to illustrate the character of that sacral meal which Jesus observed on the shore of the lake. It was as truly a sacrament as any true sacrament of the Church. For there is no true sacrament of the Church which is not altogether and utterly eschatological. If penance is a true sacrament, it is because absolution is valid beyond the grave—'Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' Marriage does not fit into this scheme—but then it is notorious that it fits in with no theory of sacraments. The sacrament of orders? No, obviously not. Except such grace of orders as the Apostles had, which contained the promise that, when the Kingdom comes, they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Anointing with oil, which was originally a quasi-physical means of healing the sick, became a sacrament only when it was used as 'extreme unction,' an anointing beforehand of the body for its burial. And the Eucharist? Yes, that most clearly of all. For that is what the sacral meal by the lake-side was. It was the first Eucharist, the earliest origin of our ecclesiastical sacrament.

The Synoptic Gospels have obscured that fact by transforming that sacral banquet into a miracle which defies natural law. The earliest tradition could misapprehend this event, because even the disciples themselves did not understand it. Both of the parallel traditions preserved by St. Mark contain an allusion to the fact that the disciples 'had not understood about the loaves' ($6^{52}$, $8^{17-19}$). The editor was obliged to distort the significance of this, for he did not even understand what it was the disciples had not understood. But St. John, who suppressed the Last Supper, perceived that this earlier supper was in fact the first Eucharist. It is true that by the words, 'my flesh —my blood,' he implies the supper he suppresses, for the first supper was not illuminated by that touching and instructive parable. And in spite of that it was a sacrament, and was not made more sacramental but only more intelli-

gible and instructive by the words which were uttered at the Last Supper. This perception is a precious acquisition, as we shall discover when we come to study the last two suppers at Jerusalem.

In fact, even on the face of the narrative as it now stands, the similarities with the Last Supper are too plain to be for ever overlooked. With the same solemn ceremony, in both instances, Jesus took the loaf, pronounced the blessing, broke it and distributed it. And it appears as if St. John was not the only one who discerned that the supper by the lake was the earliest origin of the Eucharist. For in the catacombs at Rome the sacrament of the Eucharist was commonly represented, not by a picture of thirteen in the upper room, but by a company reclining on the ground, with seven baskets and two fish conspicuously in evidence. It appears that the symbol of the fish was not so early as this picture, for it seems to be a summary expression of it. The famous acrostic (I X Θ Y S—*Iesous Xristos Θeou Yios Soter*) must therefore have been an afterthought. We must allow some time for the elaboration of such a symbol. Yet in one of the earliest parts of the catacombs at Rome (crypt of Lucina, cemetery of Calixtus, dated within the first decade of the second century) we find the fish symbol in the most expressive form it ever assumed. If that implies a knowledge of St. John's Gospel, it is the earliest external testimony to its existence that we have. More likely it descended from another line of tradition—perhaps one so ancient that John himself could draw upon it.

At any rate, the eschatological reference of the Eucharist was never wholly obscured. For no other reason in the world that we can imagine was this theme so frequently employed for the decoration of Christian burial-places, and was the celebration of this sacrament so much in vogue as a commemoration of the departed. St. Ignatius speaks of it as ' the drug of immortality, the antidote of death.' This expression is significant, though taken in a literal sense it ' overthroweth the nature of a sacrament.' The eschatological reference crops up where we would least expect it —in the Gospel of the great anti-eschatologist, St. John.

It is not only that he correlates it with ' eternal life ' (which is his favourite substitute for the Kingdom of God), but he connects it expressly with the resurrection of the dead (Jn $6^{39,40}$). But *we* are bound to have it all now—to have everlasting life *now*, before the resurrection of the dead. That is what St. John offers, and for that he deserves to be called a mystic. St. Paul (who was not behind any in mystical or ecstatical experience) affirms that ' we are of all men the most pitiable, if in this life only we have hope in Christ ' ; and no authentic word of Jesus contradicts this—least of all the words which he uttered at the Last Supper, concluding with ' I shall not drink again any more of the fruit of the vine until That Day when I drink it " new " [*i.e.* with a heavenly change] in the Kingdom of God.'

We have seen reason enough to convince us that we are not following a whim of the symbolists, but are guided by a true historical perception when we trace the ecclesiastical Eucharist back to the supper on the shore of the lake. This first Eucharist lacked neither the form nor the matter of a sacrament. The ' matter ' was bread and fish ; the ' form ' was the ordinary blessing at meals, used with a peculiar ' intention.' This is the jargon of a ' *theo*logy ' which has little enough to do with God. But we, too, must speak this language, if there are some who understand no other. The form of consecration of the Eucharist can be no other than that which was used by Jesus at the Last Supper, and that in turn is the same that he used by the shore of the lake. But what was that ? In neither case is it reported what he said. In the text now before us we are simply told that ' he said the blessing,' that he ' gave thanks,' and, of the fishes, that he ' blessed *them*.' Three very different expressions, but they all mean the same thing. There is the same variety in the accounts of the Last Supper. One of these expressions, ' to bless ' (*eulogein*), simply translates the Hebrew word ; the other, ' to give thanks ' (*eucharistein*), interprets the meaning. We know that in the Hebrew blessing at meals only God was blessed. The form was, ' Blessed be thou '—equivalent to ' Thanks be to thee.' But we know too that, according to the Jews'

conception, a thing could be effectively consecrated only by giving God thanks for it (1 Tim. $4^{4, 5}$). Therefore the thing itself (bread, fish, or 'the cup') was said to be blessed. That Hebrew idiom has given rise to serious misapprehensions. But we can be sure that, in form at least, the consecrating prayer at both suppers was nothing else but thanksgiving to God. With approximate accuracy we can even reproduce this prayer which was not reported. Knowing the traditional Jewish 'blessing,' and mindful of our Lord's peculiar preferences in prayer, we may be sure that it ran approximately as follows: Blessed be thou, Father who givest us day by day our daily bread. Just that was sufficient for the 'form' of a sacrament! Jesus did not believe in 'much speaking.' In fact, the earliest ecclesiastical form of consecration we know (*Didache*, end of the first century) is hardly more than the Jewish blessing at meals, except for the significant conclusion, 'Maranatha' —that is, 'The Lord cometh.' Thoroughgoing eschatology! This Aramaic exclamation, like an erratic boulder in a smooth meadow, recalls the lively expectation of the multitude by the lake shore and of the disciples in the upper room. It is natural and right that we in our Eucharistic prayer should remember Jesus in the days of his flesh and recount with gratitude what he did and said 'on the night on which he was betrayed.' He who acts as host in Jesus' stead (the vicar of Christ!) may well desire to imitate even his gestures. But if we have the mind of Jesus, the mind which he sought to instil also in his disciples, we shall wish to remember him too as he *is* and as he is to be. In fact, every historical liturgy but our own repeats the festal acclaim, *Benedictus qui venit!* No one of them, however, makes that note predominant. And that is a matter of no small moment. It is not a question of this or that saying of Jesus which we do not perfectly understand or faithfully obey. It is the question whether we understand him at all, whether we are even facing in the same direction as he. For from first to last, by the lake shore and in the upper room, he resolutely oriented his disciples towards the future, towards an everlasting hope —the Kingdom of God.

## ¶¶ 44–48 ||50–54. Leaving the Crowd.

### ¶ 44. Prayer and an Apparition.

Mk $6^{45}$–$^{52}$. Then he made his disciples get into the boat at once and cross before him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

46 And when he had taken leave of the crowd he went up on the hill to pray. 47 And when evening was come the boat was far out in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land. 48 And when he saw that they were driven helplessly, for the wind was contrary to them, about the fourth watch of the night he went to them, walking on the sea, intending to join them. 49 But when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost and screamed aloud. 50 For all of them saw him and were terrified. He, however, at once spoke to them. 'Courage!' he said, 'It is I, do not be scared.' 51 And he got into the boat with them, and the wind fell. And they were quite out of their senses,— 52 for they had not understood about the loaves, for their mind was hardened.

### ¶ 50.

Mk $8^{9b}$–$^{10a}$. Then he dismissed the crowd, 10 and he at once got into the boat with his disciples.

Mk $8^{22a}$. And they came to Bethsaida.

### ¶ 53. Dangerous Yeast.

Mk $8^{13}$–$^{21}$. And leaving them [the Pharisees!] he again embarked and went across the lake. 14 And they had forgotten to bring bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat.

15 And he warned them, saying, 'Look out! Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod!'

[16] And they were discussing among themselves about not having any bread, [17] and Jesus noticed it and said to them, 'Why do you discuss about not having any bread? Do you not yet see nor understand? Is your mind hardened? [18] Having eyes do you not see? and having ears do you not hear? [19] And do you not remember how many baskets full of fragments you picked up when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand?' And they said to him, 'Twelve.' [20] 'And when I broke the seven for the four thousand how many baskets full of fragments did you pick up?' [21] And they said, 'Seven.' And he said to them, 'Do you not yet understand?'

¶ 45. RETURN TO THE WEST SHORE.

Mk $6^{53-56}$. And crossing to the land, they went to the region of Gennesaret and moored the boat. [54] And as soon as he left the boat the people recognized Jesus [55] and hurried all over the countryside and began to bring the sick on their mattresses wherever they heard that he was. [56] And whatever village or town or farm he went to, they would lay their sick in the street and beg him to

¶ 51. RETURN TO THE WEST SHORE.

Mk $8^{10b}$. And they went to the district of Dalmanutha.

let them touch just the tassel of his cloak. And all who touched him were healed.

¶ 46. Conflict with the Pharisees.

Mk 7[1–23]. And the Pharisees gathered about him with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem. [2] They had noticed that some of his disciples ate their food with 'common' (that is, unwashed) hands. [3] (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they have washed their hands to the wrist, observing the tradition of the elders; [4] and when they come in from the street they will not eat until they are sprinkled; and there are many other things which tradition requires them to observe, such as the sprinkling of cups and jugs and basins and beds.) [5] Then the Pharisees and the scribes put the question to him, 'Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders, but take their food with "common" hands?' [6] But he said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied finely about you hypocrites, as it is written,

*This people honours me with their lips,*
*but their heart is far from me:*

¶ 52. Conflict with the Pharisees.

Mk 8[11, 12]. And the Pharisees came out and started a discussion with him, asking him to show them a sign from heaven,—putting him in a fix. [12] And he sighed in spirit and said, 'Why does this generation ask for a sign? *Amen* I say to you that no sign shall be given to this generation.'

[7]*vain is their worship of me,*
*for the doctrines they teach*
*are only human precepts.*

[8] You neglect the commandments of God and observe the traditions of men,—the sprinkling of jugs and cups and other such like things you perform.'

[9] And he said, 'Do you do well to set aside the commandment of God in order that you may keep your tradition? [10] For Moses said, *Honour your father and your mother,* and *He who curses his father or mother shall be put to death.* [11] But you say that if a man tells his father or mother, "This property of mine which might be useful to you is *korban*" (that is, dedicated to God), [12] you exempt him from doing anything more for his father or mother, — [13] revoking the word of God in the interest of the tradition which you keep. And many such like customs you practise.' [14] And he called again the crowd to him and said to them, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand this: [15] Nothing that goes into a man from outside him can defile him, but it is what comes out of a man that defiles a man. [16] If any one has ears to hear, let him hear.' [17] And when he went into a

house away from the crowd his disciples asked him the meaning of this 'parable.' [18] And he said to them, 'So even you do not understand? Do you not perceive that nothing outside a man can defile him by entering, [19] since it does not go into his heart but into the belly and passes out through the bowels which cleanse all food? [20] But,' said he, 'what comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil designs, sexual vice, [22] thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envyings, slanders, arrogance, folly,—[23] all these evils come from within, and they defile a man.'

¶ 47. A Woman in the Region of Tyre.

Mk 7[24–30]. Leaving there, he went away into the region of Tyre and Sidon, and he entered a house and wished no one to know of it, but he could not escape notice. [25] For a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came in and fell at his feet. [26] She was a pagan woman, a Syrophoenician by race. And she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter. [27] And he said to her, 'Let the children first be fed, for it is not nice to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.' [28] She replied to him, 'Yes, Sir, but the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' [29] And he said to her, 'Because of this answer you can go. The demon has left your daughter.' [30] So she went home and found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

¶ 48. A Strange Way of Healing.

Mk $7^{31-37}$. **And he left the neighbourhood of Tyre and passed through Sidon to the sea of Galilee, crossing the territory of Decapolis. 32 And they brought to him a deaf man who stammered, and they begged him to lay his hands upon him. 33 And taking him off by himself away from the crowd, he put his fingers in the man's ears and touched his tongue with saliva, 34 and looking up to heaven he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha' (which means, 'Open'). 35 Then his ears were at once opened and his tongue was freed, and he talked correctly. 36 And Jesus forbade them to tell any one about it. But the more he forbade them, the more eagerly they proclaimed it. 37 And they were utterly amazed and said, 'How well he has done everything! He even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'**

¶ 54. A Strange Way of Healing

Mk $8^{22b-26}$. **And they brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village, then, after spitting upon his eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked him, 'Do you see anything?' 24 And he looked up and said, 'I can see people who look like trees, only they are moving.' 25 Then he laid his hands on his eyes again, and the man gazed intently and was quite cured and saw everything plainly. 26 And he sent him home and said to him, 'Do not even go into the village.'**

When we have printed in parallel columns all that we find in St. Mark between $6^{30}$ and $8^{26}$ a glance suffices to assure us that he has combined end to end two parallel traditions. But the similarity of the two traditions is really much closer than at first appears. Moreover, where the parallelism fails, the explanation is not far to seek. The fact that the second cycle is now too incomplete to be intelligible suggests that parts were omitted when this cycle

was combined with the other; and it is plausible to conjecture that they were omitted because they were obviously a repetition of what had been told before. A miracle like the feeding of the multitude might be repeated (with variations) and would have the effect of enhancing the impression of Jesus' power; but it could only be ridiculous to repeat Jesus' long discourse about the things that defile a man, and I conjecture therefore that to give variety to the second cycle the Pharisees' question was changed into a demand for 'a sign from heaven.' The one place where the second cycle is fuller than the first can be explained without any conjecture. We must suppose that originally something was said there (as in $6^{52}$) about the disciples' failure to understand the distribution of the loaves; for there the editor took it as a cue for introducing a colloquy ($8^{16-21}$) which served him as a testimony (from Jesus' own mouth!) that the two stories of the feeding of the multitude related to two distinct occasions. That editorial comment could, of course, have been introduced only in the second cycle. As a result of such reduction the second cycle has fallen into hopeless confusion. Perhaps even the first is not any longer chronologically exact. Taken together, they present a mad picture of criss-crossing back and forth on the lake, without any intelligible motive.

To make plain the significance of this whole central portion of St. Mark's Gospel (Part II) I set down briefly here my notion of the sequence of events—which I follow as far as the moment when Jesus definitely started for Jerusalem ($9^{30}$), without even calling attention to certain conjectures (especially the transposition of Peter's confession to some time *after* the Transfiguration) which I shall seek to justify when we study the next section (§ 7).

With a feeling that his work in Galilee was finished, Jesus sent the Twelve Apostles on a hasty mission to proclaim throughout all Galilee the coming of the Reign of God. It was meant as a farewell gesture, and it was in fact so striking a gesture that it attracted to Jesus the attention both of John the Baptist and of Herod. It was just at this time Herod put John to death, and that was an ominous suggestion of what he might do to this other

prophet, whom he superstitiously supposed to be John raised from the dead. But of more concern to Jesus was the fact of the Baptist's death as a martyr of the Kingdom of God. John's imprisonment had been the signal for Jesus to step forth and take his place. Now as he was preparing to leave Galilee he disclosed to the people the extraordinary estimation in which he held this man: he was Elijah, the Coming One. Perhaps John did not live to hear Jesus' reply to him through his messengers. What must the beheading of the Baptist have meant to Jesus! A new signal! But a signal of what? It could only be a signal that he was to follow the Forerunner and take his place . . . as a martyr? *There* at last was a definite reason for leaving Galilee. He must have solitude above all, and ample time, to permit this thought to mature.

Hence he started away from Galilee with his twelve disciples. They travelled, as they were accustomed to do, by boat, and their intention then was to go no further than the northern end of the lake, which was outside the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas and under the rule of his brother Philip. The fishermen among his disciples were familiar with the shore of the lake, and they knew of a solitary place near the village of Bethsaida. Thither they rowed. But naturally their departure in a boat did not pass unobserved, and the people, who had been roused to the highest pitch of excitement by expectation of the end of the world and the dawn of God's Kingdom, did not dare to face that event without the protecting companionship of their Elijah. So they hurried after him, watching the destination of the boat and collecting crowds from every village as they passed through. The result was that Jesus found his solitary place already occupied by a multitude, which was increased as others found their way there. He was deeply moved by the helplessness of these enthusiasts, and lingered there all day to teach them. At that time a new note emerged in his teaching: the danger involved in following him. But there was also a note of comfort: He would intervene in their behalf with the Son of Man. When evening approached, Jesus improvised a sacral banquet with the scanty provision the disciples had brought along

for their own need. It was another farewell gesture, more intimate and personal than the mission of the Twelve ; and though the people did not understand all that he meant by it, they were aware that they were engaging in a very solemn religious rite. In reality it was a sacrament of the Kingdom of God, a pledge that they should be Jesus' table-companions at the celestial banquet. It was the first Eucharist.

That being over, Jesus sent the disciples on before him by boat to the small village of Bethsaida, where they doubtless had acquaintances, and where ultimately they found lodging in a house. He thought that when the disciples were seen to leave it would be easier for him to persuade the multitude to disperse to their homes. That did not prove possible. Jesus, however, left *them* and climbed a neighbouring hill, where he spent a great part of the night in prayer. Not so much engrossed with himself and his great problem that he forgot his disciples. He descried them far out on the lake struggling against a head wind, and as they approached the shore near Bethsaida he met them there on the beach—and they took him for a ghost. They were in fact quite out of their senses, having been carried away by the enthusiasm of the mob and profoundly impressed by the cultus meal Jesus had celebrated.

Jesus seems to have lingered several days in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida and taught the people the necessity of living dangerously. ' Six days after ' (what terminus we do not know) he took with him the three favourite disciples to the mountain where he had spent the night in prayer. And there they had a stranger experience than any they had hitherto known. In a condition of ecstasy Jesus was revealed to them as the Messiah. They not only saw a vision but heard a voice (like Jesus at his baptism). When they came to their senses Jesus commanded them to tell no one (not even the other disciples) what they had seen and heard there—until after the Resurrection. That suggested to them a difficulty. If the Resurrection was in fact so near, why had not the Forerunner, Elijah, yet appeared, as the scribes taught them to expect ? Jesus explained to

them that Elijah had not only come, but had already gone —he had been put to death.

Coming down from the hill, they found the other disciples surrounded by the crowd, which would not depart from Bethsaida so long as Jesus was there. They were then agitated about an epileptic boy, whom Jesus cured when the disciples were unable to do so. Afterwards, in the house where they lodged at Bethsaida, he admitted that this was a hard sort of demon to drive out. He could do it, for he had passed the night on the hill in fasting and prayer.

Then, for reasons which are not given, they returned by boat—not to Capernaum, but to the region in which that town lay (Gennesaret). I can only conjecture that after the Transfiguration it seemed still more imperative that he should get away—far away now, into territory which was purely pagan, where he might hope to have complete solitude, and for a long season. It would not have been easy to escape on foot from the excited crowd that had gathered at Bethsaida. Besides, why must the fishermen sacrifice the boat, when they could row to the neighbourhood of their home and moor it there? From Galilee it would be possible to escape unobserved, if they went on foot. But not easy, as it proved. For the people there were as enthusiastic about him as ever, and as he passed through their villages and hamlets going north the sick were laid in the streets in the hope of touching him. He seemed to be falling back into his old activities. And there was another familiar experience: the scribes who had been brought from Jerusalem to put him in his proper place came forward with their last objection to his laxity in observing the traditions of the elders. And Jesus stopped to make a long and telling reply. And that ended for ever his public work in Galilee.

We are told next that they were in the region of Tyre and Sidon. That extended far from the coast and back to the territory of Damascus. Presumably he wandered long with his disciples in those parts, always taking precautions to remain unknown. But because nothing happened in those days we are told nothing, except Jesus'

generous response to a pagan woman's apt reply. Except for that picturesque incident, the evangelical tradition would have handed down to us no trace of this wandering, no hint even that Jesus had ever gone so far.

When he left the neighbourhood of Tyre he wandered into the territory of Sidon and then through the Decapolis (Ten Cities) to the northern end of the lake of Galilee. There (at Bethsaida ?) he performed a cure (of a deaf man ? or a blind one ?) which is sharply distinguished from his cures in Galilee by the magical use of saliva. Then he goes further north, to the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi. And there, when he was asking his disciples what the common opinion about him was—and then what conclusion they themselves had come to—Peter blurted out the secret he was commanded to keep till the Resurrection. 'You are the Messiah.' For that indiscretion Jesus did not rebuke Peter, but he seized the occasion to disclose to all his disciples that as the Messiah (Son of Man) he 'must endure much suffering, and be rejected by the elders and the high priests and the scribes, and be killed.' That 'he said openly.' But 'Peter took him aside and began to reprove him for it.' That was a new revelation. And how disconcerting to the Three who had been expecting the Resurrection—and thrones and crowns ! For the Resurrection about which Jesus spoke after the Transfiguration did not necessarily imply death (1 Cor. $15^{51}$), still less ignominy and a death by violence. At that, Jesus, 'noticing the disciples,' and not wishing that they should learn more of the secret, gave Peter a resounding rebuke : 'Get out of my sight, Satan ! '

But the great secret was then known to all of the Twelve, Jesus' own mind was made up, the Passover was at hand, and from Caesarea Philippi Jesus started with his disciples towards Jerusalem, passing again through Galilee, but avoiding notice, and not beginning again to teach the people till the caravan with which he was travelling crossed the border of Judaea ($9^{30, 33}$, $10^{1}$).

We have now to substantiate this sketch as we study the text in detail. Though this is historically the least

satisfactory part of St. Mark's Gospel, the text will bear detailed study. It does not leave us completely in the lurch. I shall follow it closely in what I am about to say, and I hope that the reader will keep his eye upon it, in spite of the fact that, for the sake of eliminating the confusion caused by reduplication, I have felt constrained to print this long passage all at once in parallel columns, so that the text is now remote from the discussion which refers to it. I should like to pursue here and throughout the same method of comment I began with, but I find that I have to cut the coat to fit the cloth.

¶¶ 44 (50, 53). *A Night of Prayer.* Mk $6^{45-52}$ ($8^{9b-10a, 13-22a}$).

'Then he made his disciples get into the boat at once and cross before him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.' It is not a rash conjecture that Jesus expected to be able more easily to persuade the crowd to disperse to their homes, if he were left alone with them, and they had seen his disciples depart. It was to Bethsaida he sent them, and it must be presumed that it was there they actually went—although the first cycle has obscured this fact and the second records it in a half verse ($8^{22a}$) which is now misplaced. St. John's Gospel ($6^{24}$) transports Jesus and the disciples at once to Capernaum. That is in fact a notion one might easily get from the Synoptic account. Gennesaret (Mk $6^{53}$), Josephus tells us, was a name for the region in which Capernaum was situated, and Dalmanutha (Mk $8^{10}$) was probably in the same neighbourhood. Bethsaida was at the north end of the lake, beyond the Jordan, and was then under the rule of Philip. Josephus says (*Antiquities*, xviii. 28) that Philip gave to Paneas the name of Caesarea and raised the village of Bethsaida on the lake of Gennesar to the dignity of a town, calling it Julias in honour of the empress. It appears from St. Mark that the old village still existed, and it was to that Jesus betook himself rather than to the city. Wellhausen calls attention to the fact that he did not enter the city of Caesarea, but was in 'the villages of Caesarea'—so also in 'the region of Tyre'—and that he entered no large city till he went up to Jerusalem.

'Bethsaida of Galilee, the home of Philip, Andrew, and Peter' (Jn $1^{44}$, $12^{21}$) is a sheer invention of the author of the Fourth Gospel.

We need not be surprised if Jesus was not successful in persuading the multitude to return to their homes. They seem to have lingered near Bethsaida as long as he was there. But if the sheep would not be driven away from the shepherd, the shepherd could leave *them*. He climbed a nearby hill, and there at last he found the solitude he sought. It appears that this was the first opportunity Jesus had to be alone and reflect upon the martyrdom which John's tragic end signalized to him. Yet, even then (as again in the garden of Gethsemane), he was not so much engrossed with his own problem and threatening fate that he was unmindful of his weak disciples. It seemed only too likely that they would be involved with him in the same catastrophe. And at that moment they were so beside themselves ($6^{51, 52}$) after the excitements of that day, that they hardly knew what they were doing. We must take into account the effect of mob psychology. A revival meeting is a faint analogy. And Jesus' distribution of the loaves! They did not understand what it meant, but they were aware that something very solemn was being done. There never was indeed a more solemn Eucharist, unless it was the last he celebrated, in the upper room. By moonlight (may we suppose?) Jesus could descry their boat far out in the middle of the lake—whereas they had only to hug the coast to reach Bethsaida, if the solitary place was near that village, and if Jesus could plan to rejoin them on foot after his vigil on the mountain. Evidently they did not know well what they were doing or whither they were going. And out in the middle of the lake the wind was strong against them.

Jesus, though he did not descend from his hill till a late hour of the night, reached the deserted beach of Bethsaida before his disciples; and they, as they drew near the land, and were not aware how near they were, the wind being off shore, beheld him waiting for them—and thought it was a ghost walking on the water, and screamed aloud. They were in a state of 'ecstasy' (that is the word used here),

which made anything seem possible to them. St. John's account has suggested this rationalistic explanation—which, in spite of my dislike of rationalistic explanations of miracles, I am fain to accept . . . for lack of a better. John says ($6^{21}$) that 'they proposed to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land whither they were going.' That may have been meant by St. John as an additional miracle. It is a curious fact that the Fourth Gospel nowhere follows the Synoptic tradition so closely as here where it is most defective.

Jesus' reproach of Bethsaida in Mt $11^{12}$ implies that impressive deeds had been done by Jesus there. It is singled out as one of the principal scenes of Jesus' activity, along with Capernaum. Chorazin, which in this connection is brought into the same prominence, is nowhere else mentioned in the Gospels. Which proves that there are gaps in the story of Jesus which we have no means at all of filling up. But with respect to Bethsaida we are in a better case. It is true that the only 'mighty work' clearly identified with this place was a strange method of healing on the occasion of a later visit on the way to Caesarea ($7^{31, 32}$, $8^{22}$); but the day spent with the multitude in the solitary spot, the night on the mountain, and the strange meeting with the disciples were all associated with Bethsaida, and in the study of the next following section we shall see reason to believe that Jesus found lodging in Bethsaida for himself and his disciples ($9^{28}$), that they remained there at least six days ($9^{2}$), that there for the first time he taught the people the grim significance of living eschatologically ($8^{34}$–$9^{1}$), that on the same hill where Jesus had spent a night of solitary prayer he was transfigured before the three disciples ($9^{2–13}$), and that at the foot of that hill he cured the epileptic boy ($9^{14–27}$). That is enough to explain why Bethsaida was a spot especially memorable to Jesus.

Mk $6^{52}$, 'For they had not understood about the loaves.' That must have been a part of the earliest tradition, for it does not agree at all with the later conception of the sacral banquet as a sheer creation of thousands of loaves and fish. It is a euphemism to speak of a 'multiplication' of the loaves—as if it were a mathematical operation, or as if the

five loaves which were provided in a natural way were a sort of nest-egg which explained in a measure the incommensurable production. As a sheer miracle the thing was of course not ' understood ' by the disciples—but then also it was superfluous to say that they did not understand, and unreasonable to blame them.

Some such reference to their lack of understanding of Jesus' purpose in celebrating a solemn cultus meal with a few loaves must have stood also in the second cycle—with the additional remark that ' they were discussing among themselves about not having any bread ' ($8^{16}$). We wonder, in fact, that they had even the one loaf which is mentioned in verse 14, for we were told that all their provision of food was divided among the multitude. But they might well be discussing their lack of food, for by that time they must have been hungry. The editor (Mark or some other before him) who combined these two traditions used this reference to bread as an occasion for lugging in a colloquy in which Jesus, while upbraiding his disciples for not understanding the two miracles, himself attests that there actually were *two*, and so justifies the editor. We can easily identify $8^{17-21}$ as an editorial intrusion.

On the other hand, though the saying about yeast ($8^{15}$) may be an intrusion in this context (suggested by the same reference to bread), it looks like an authentic saying of Jesus. All the more so because it is so strange a saying that neither Matthew ($16^{6}$) nor Luke ($12^{1}$) were able to understand it. Mark has : ' Look out ! Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod ! ' How can the Pharisees and Herod be combined ? Luke simply leaves Herod out, while Matthew puts in his place the Sadducees. St. Mark's, being the harder phrase, is evidently original. And we can manage to understand it. One of the parables of the Kingdom ($3^{6}$) shows that Jesus had observed the mysterious properties of yeast. It is a ferment which, under favourable conditions of heat and darkness (passion and secrecy), grows so rapidly that in a short time a whole lump is leavened. There were two yeasty conspiracies brewing against him at that time : that of the Pharisees and that of Herod—and they were not unconnected, for

already the Pharisees had ($3^6$) joined forces with the Herodians. Their antagonism to Jesus was the only thing the Pharisees and Herod had in common. Therefore, 'Look out! Be on your guard!'

¶¶ 45 (51). *Return to the West Shore.* Mk $6^{53-56}$ ($8^{10b}$).

After spending we do not know how many days at Bethsaida, and for reasons which we can only conjecture, Jesus determined to return with his disciples to Galilee. If the warning about the danger they might encounter from the part of the Pharisees and Herod was uttered at this time, it was timely. They were again about to venture forth 'as sheep in the midst of wolves.' But presumably Jesus reckoned that the yeast had not yet had time to raise the lump, and in any case he had no intention of lingering long in those dangerous parts. He intended only to pass through Galilee on his way to a remote pagan country, on foot. And he did not go again to Capernaum, but to some point in that neighbourhood which the first cycle does not name ($6^{53}$) and the second identifies as Dalmanutha ($8^{10}$).

We can, as I have said, only conjecture the reasons for his going there. But we can safely conjecture that, having found no solitude at Bethsaida, and feeling the extremest need of it after the experience of the Transfiguration, he must have thought of betaking himself to a region exclusively pagan, where his fame had not spread, and where he could go only on foot. It is not too hazardous to conjecture that it might have been difficult to escape on foot from the excited crowd that had gathered around him at Bethsaida. And I venture to guess that the frugal fishermen would not wish to abandon their boat at the north end of the lake, when they could easily return with it to the neighbourhood of their home and 'moor it' (that is, drag it up on the beach), where friends or relatives would look after it. This word is used here only, and it may be significant. At all events, this is the last time we find Jesus in a boat.

On returning to Galilee it was clear that the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod had not yet leavened the whole lump. For as soon as the people recognized him they welcomed him with the same enthusiasm as before, and as

he was not staying in one place but moving steadily towards the north, they ' hurried all over the country-side and began to bring the sick on their mattresses wherever they heard that he was. And whatever village or town or farm he went to, they would lay their sick in the main street and beg him to let them touch just the tassel of his cloak. And all who touched him were healed ' ($6^{56, 57}$).

¶¶ 46 (52). *Conflict with the Pharisees.* Mk $7^{1-23}$ ($8^{11, 12}$).

But the yeast of the Pharisees was working. They were supported by the scribes who had been brought from Jerusalem before his departure—either because there were no properly accredited scribes in Galilee or none of sufficient authority. Jesus did not need to fear that they would do him violence while he was supported by the enthusiastic favour of the crowd. They could do no more than seek to embarrass him with questions. That was their *métier*. Their challenge now was not so dangerous as several they had proffered heretofore. It did not have to do with a breach of the Mosaic law (like the Sabbath question), but only with a tradition of the ' elders ' about ceremonial cleansing. The Evangelist, though himself a Jew, describes these traditional customs with evident scorn ($7^{3, 4, 8}$). The Pharisees had noticed that ' some ' of Jesus' disciples were accustomed to neglect the ceremonial rule which required them to wash their hands before eating anything. It would seem that Jesus' own conduct in this respect was irreproachable. He was a good practising Jew. But, as we have seen, he did not, like John, impose any new ritual practices upon his disciples, and he was very far from thinking of taking them to account for the neglect of conventional practices common to all pious people. The disciples may have divined something in Jesus' attitude towards such questions which emancipated their consciences from the necessity of scrupulous observance. But we must remember that some of them were ' tax-gatherers and sinners ' who had never been used to such practices.

' Wash ' is the word used here for the ceremonial cleansing of the hands ; afterwards the technical word ' sprinkle ' (baptize) is employed. I do not wish to involve myself in

the Baptist controversy about the necessity of immersion. It is clear, at all events, that sprinkling was all that was required for pots and pans ; and it is important to observe that the question here is about ceremonial cleansing (the brighter side of *tabu*), not about hygiene or effective cleanliness.

It seems to us now ridiculous that this incident has commonly been regarded as a turning-point in Jesus' career —as if by this comparatively mild attack from the part of the Pharisees his prestige in Galilee had been destroyed and he had felt compelled to retire to heathen territory. This was, in fact, his last controversy with the Pharisees in Galilee ; but when we put the horse before the cart we perceive that this was because these tiresome people intercepted him as he was leaving their country. Jesus was very far from being abashed by their criticism. He met it with the longest reply he had ever made to his adversaries—and it was a reply full of bitter scorn. He worsted the scribes on their own ground, the field of Biblical interpretation ; and when he had finished with them he showed his contempt more fully by calling upon the crowd, as better judges, to hear his philosophical conclusion. ' Where did this man get this knowledge ? ' is a question we also are prompted to ask. We know that he was an autodidact, and yet he always proved himself a better scribe than the scribes who opposed him. He beat them at their own game—yet not by a specious virtuosity in exegesis, rather by getting at the very heart of the Scripture. There is only one case where he seems to treat the Scripture with the same sort of cleverness the scribes used. That is when (Mk $12^{35-37}$) he suggested a doubt about the propriety of conceiving of the Messiah as a son of David, inasmuch as David himself, the inspired Psalmist, spoke of him as his Lord. In another place (Mt $5^{22}$)—but not in interpreting the Scripture—he mockingly mimicked the scribes and their vain quisquilia by apportioning apparently different degrees of punishment (which in reality all came to the same thing) to various offences against the law of love (which in reality were not different offences). To ' be angry,' to say ' Raca,' or to say ' Thou fool,' was really the same thing ; and ' the judgment,'

'the council,' and 'hell fire,' were not different things. That is an example of Jesus' irony. I have no distaste for irony. But it is consoling to recognize how sincere was Jesus' interpretation of the Holy Scripture. He did not rest satisfied with the letter, but sought to get at the heart of the matter, caring only to know what was the will of God, his heavenly Father. The fact that he succeeded is very marvellous indeed, for in Israel there was no precedent for such interpretation as his, nor did his disciples (St. Paul among them) share his exemption from the bad influence of the scribes.

The modern Christian has now, of course, got beyond all danger of interpreting the Scripture artificially or allegorically. He seeks only the plain historical sense. He does not 'handle the word of God deceitfully'—but he is not brought thereby any nearer to the position of Jesus, if he does not handle it as the word of God, and does not any longer expect to find in it a revelation. The disciples (oh, irony !) have become wiser than their master—not in matters discovered by modern science merely, but in their estimate of the Holy Scripture itself, the classical monument of their religion (if that is all it is). In this connection it is significant to observe that Jesus not only sought for revelation in the Scripture, but found it there. He found there not only light to direct his footsteps, but instruction for his disciples and commandments which were applicable to all mankind.

In this instance he answered the scribes with a word of Isaiah's ($29^{13}$): 'A beautiful prophecy Isaiah uttered about you hypocrites!' 'Vain is their worship of me, for the doctrines they teach are only human precepts.' 'Beautifully' apt was that prophecy as Jesus applied it: '*You* neglect the commandments of God and observe the precepts of men.' But can we disguise from ourselves the fact that it applies as aptly to a host of Christian scribes (clerics and theologians)—Protestant as well as Catholic—with respect to the conventional observances they have always been zealous to prescribe ?

The conclusion of this first paragraph suggests the beginning of the next. Jesus thrusts his sword again into

the same wound. This time he smites them with Moses (Ex. $20^{12}$; Deut. $5^{16}$): 'Do you do well to set aside the commandments of God in order that you may keep your traditions? For Moses said, "Honour your father and your mother, *etc.*"; but you say, . . .' In this commandment 'honour' does in fact mean just what this passage implies —not ceremonious signs of respect, but material support. In the same sense the word was long used also in the Church for the material support of the clergy (*e.g.* 1 Tim. $5^{17}$). From the conclusion of this saying we gather that the scribes encouraged the notion that one might sacrifice a thing without giving it up. *Korban* means sacrifice. Wellhausen says truly that Jesus did not need to protest in his day, as the early prophets had done, against the practice of sacrificing. Owing to the Dispersion, and to the prohibition of offering sacrifice anywhere but in Jerusalem, the practice had shrunk to almost nothing. Against the little that remained of the genuine practice Jesus did protest when he entered the Temple. But it appears from this passage that outside of Jerusalem it had shrunk to a still more unlovely form, which Jesus scourged in Galilee. For it appears that, by a legal fiction, it was arranged that a man might have his cake and eat it too—he might offer a thing as a sacrifice to God and yet enjoy the use of it for his lifetime. God was the possessor when once the thing was 'dedicated' to him, and it could not be given to another—not even to a father and mother who were in need. Certainly this is not a lovely conception of sacrifice, but neither is it strange. The Chinaman offers his sacrifice of rice to the soul of a departed parent, and when the spiritual part of the sacrifice has been consumed he eats himself the material part. Religion is everywhere just the same old thing—a humbug, and an opiate of the conscience; even in Christendom—where the clergy have naturally enough encouraged people to save their souls by leaving generous legacies to churches and monasteries, and where many civil governments have felt compelled to forbid a practice which was likely to defraud the natural heirs.

So much for Biblical interpretation in direct response to the scribes. Their 'attack' upon Jesus was a diffident

question: his 'apology' was a furious attack. Then he called upon the crowd to listen to an apophthegm which positively disposed of this whole question—and of many others, we might suppose. The question there at issue was the ceremonial cleansing of food, but Jesus' apophthegm is broad enough to cover also the question which divided the early Church—namely, whether it was permissible for Christians (Jews or Gentiles) to eat the meat of animals which were reckoned by the Mosaic law as 'unclean.' We cannot but wonder that St. Paul in his controversy did not appeal to this saying. There is no doubt that Jesus himself ate *kosher*, but we can hardly suppose that he would require any one else to do so. With great solemnity he here calls attention to a broad philosophical maxim, which later he explains psychologically to his disciples. 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand this: Nothing that goes into a man from outside him can defile him, but it is what comes out of a man that defiles a man.' This maxim was evidently axiomatic to Jesus, but it was obscure to his hearers because it was sententiously brief. Therefore he adds, 'If any one has ears to hear, let him hear.' This saying might be called a 'parable,' because it was evidently meant to be obscure, and one might guess that it was figurative.

It appears, however, from the explanation given to the Twelve, that the first part of this saying was meant very literally indeed. 'Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats,' is a proverb St. Paul quotes with a different intent, but it could be used here. Meats and belly—each is adapted to the other, and the belly is able to make use of all foods which are not poisonous, separating the wholesome elements for assimilation and disposing of the rest. No defilement is possible here. No wholesome foods can be unclean in a physiological sense. And because foods do not enter into the heart they cannot defile a man in a moral sense. The heart, according to the Hebrews, was not the seat of the affections, as our popular philosophy represents it, but of the intellect, the mind, the conscious life. From within a man, out of this central source, come the things that defile a man. And what a catalogue of evil things Jesus recites! 'He knew what was in man,' as St. John says. No psycho-

analyst better! 'Out of the heart of man come evil designs, sexual vice, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envyings, slanders, arrogance, folly.' Poor defiled man! Let him who is without sin cast the first stone at him. Jesus didn't. But what becomes of our optimistic Jesus, who was so calmly confident of the essential goodness of man that we sometimes wonder . . . why he thought it necessary to die for him. But perhaps it was only for a few defiled men Christ died—not certainly for the pew-holders in our better churches.

¶ 47. *A Woman in the Region of Tyre.* Mk $7^{24-30}$.

We might never have known that Jesus fled as far as the region of Tyre, if this obscure woman had not made a reply so apposite that it was valued by the Evangelists as good copy. And only one of the traditions we are here following has preserved it. The region of Tyre, says Josephus, bordered Galilee on the north. So Jesus may have penetrated some distance into that region before he outstripped his fame. 'He entered a house and wished no one to know it, but he could not escape notice. For a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came in and fell at his feet.' Because she was a pagan woman and not of the Jewish race, Jesus gave her a harsh answer, refusing her petition. He would not drive the demon out of her daughter. 'Let the children first be fed, for it is not nice to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.' Unnecessarily harsh, we are inclined to think. The 'gentle Jesus,' when it came to dealing with outsiders, was no better than a narrow nationalist. He might have been satisfied with saying, 'Children *first*.'

'Children first' was undoubtedly Jesus' motto for the days of his earthly 'ministry.' Mark does not say so expressly. He does not report the injunction to the Twelve (Mt $10^{5-6}$), 'In a road of the Gentiles do not walk, and into a city of the Samaritans do not enter; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Yet that word is not of doubtful authenticity, and Mark consistently represents Jesus as confining his labours actually to the house of Israel. That was plainly enough signified by the number of his

Apostles. It was the number of the twelve tribes. Only at the very last, in the eschatological discourse, does St. Mark attribute to him the notion that the Gospel has a universal reference, ' must be preached to all nations ' ($13^{10}$). So says Wellhausen, implying that this circumstance is suspicious, that in reality Jesus never lifted up his eyes to look beyond the borders of Israel. One might suppose that with his narrow Galilean outlook he had never thought even of the Jewish dispersion. (It will be thought pedantic that I cite so often the opinions of foreign authors. But really it is not clear to me what the Reverend Doctor So-and-so's opinion is on such a subject. To mention only one of our most graceful and popular religious writers—who is a guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness. Is it an unworthy suspicion that he has no reasoned opinion on such subjects ?) I return to Wellhausen—and remark that he could hold no other opinion so long as he persists in denying that Jesus entertained any clearly defined eschatological hope. But if this is admitted, the universal reference of the Gospel is a matter of course. If God is really God (not the local deity of Palestine), if he is the almighty and transcendent God (not merely the numinous experience which a certain number of persons, the mystically minded *élite*, are able to discover within themselves), then his Kingdom extendeth over all, and his eyes are open upon all his works. The grandeur of the eschatological view is its cosmical universality. A ' regeneration ' (*paliggenesia*, Mt $19^{28}$) which involves a new heaven and a new earth cannot possibly have an interest only for a single nation. Jesus could not entertain such a view without conceiving also the glad and sombre foreboding to which he gave voice in Mt $8^{11}$ : ' That many shall come from the east and west and shall recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob ' at the celestial banquet—while ' the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out.' He could say that ' it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment ' (Mk $6^{11}$). Yet it is not true that St. Mark records only one expression of the universal reference of the Gospel. Jesus is reported to have said about the ' beautiful deed ' of the woman at Bethany,

'Wherever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this deed also shall be spoken of as a memorial of her' (14[9]).

And yet it is absolutely true that Jesus in the days of his flesh felt that 'a dispensation of the Gospel had been committed' to him, a special task amongst a particular people. He was not omnipresent. Therefore his influence was limited like that of other men. He was limited on all sides in the same way as other men. 'Man kann nur etwas, nicht alles werden.' Of necessity his influence was limited to the people whose language he spoke, whose customs he shared, who were his kinsmen 'according to the flesh'—but 'chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God,' to whom first pertained 'the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the service of God and the promises' (Rom. 3[2], 9[4]). This limitation Jesus did not feel as an irksome necessity: he recognized in it God's dispensation for him, his specific mission, marching orders as definite as those he had given to his disciples. Austere but comforting, for this fixed the bounds of his duty within the limits of his possibility. 'I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'—this, according to St. Matthew (15[24]), is the first reply Jesus made to the woman of Tyre, and the saying is aptly placed here, even if it be not genuine. What then? Were the Jews better than the Gentiles? No, in no wise; for we have seen that Jesus regarded them as *all* under sin. As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.' This devastating judgment which St. Paul (Rom. 3[9–18]) quotes from the first two verses of Psalm 14 is not so pessimistic as the catalogue Jesus has just recited of all the evil things that come out of

the heart of man and defile him (Mk $7^{21-23}$). (' Away from Paul! Back to Jesus!'—out of the frying-pan into the fire). It was perfectly clear to Jesus that he was sent to the house of Israel, not because they were egregious sheep, but because they were '*lost*.'

' The children *first*.' But why must people assert that this means, the children *last*? First, last and all the time—the children *only*? I cannot get it out of my head that Jesus was glancing beyond the last that might turn to him from Israel when he affirmed the principle, ' I will give unto this last even as unto thee ' (Mt $10^{14}$). And I am very sure that the ' many ' he spoke of so mysteriously (Mk $10^{45}$, $14^{24}$) were not all Israelites. This was a ' larger hope,' though not the largest. It was natural that in the last days especially he should have cherished this broader vision. For at the end the scope of his ' ministry ' widened. It was the last act only that he himself describes as a ' ministry,' a most humble service—rendered not to Israel only but to the world. That was the distinctive ' service ' of the Son of Man—a service such as no other ' minister ' can ever render . . . for he has done it. For whom, then? That question Jesus could not answer definitely. It was for such as God might chose. Jesus could only say, ' The Son of Man is come to give his life a ransom *for many* ' ($10^{45}$). And that word he repeated at the Last Supper, lest it might be thought that his blood was shed for his disciples alone, or for Israel alone, or for that generation alone: ' My blood of the covenant which is shed *for many* ' ($14^{24}$). You cannot have eschatology without universalism: you cannot discard it without making Jesus a narrow nationalist.

Jesus had a very obvious and practical reason for not performing a cure in pagan territory. It is suggested in this passage: ' he wished no man to know it '—evidently this does not mean merely his presence in that house, but what sort of a man he was. One miracle would defeat his quest for solitude. It seems as if Jesus might have spared the pagan woman that hard word about the ' little dogs.' And yet, if he had not uttered it, we should not have known her humble but assured reply, which we also take upon our lips when we presume to approach the Lord's Table. She

did not presume to question the justice of his principle (the children *first*), but she assumes that the custom prevails even among the Jews of permitting the little dogs under the table to pick up the children's crumbs. Wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the world, that beautiful saying is spoken of as a memorial of her. Jesus, the great connoisseur, recognized the beauty of her reply and granted her request.

This is the only case St. Mark records of healing at a distance. St. Matthew ($8^{5-13}$) tells of another. It was again the case of a pagan, the servant of a Roman centurion. And that pagan captain has furnished us with our other word of confident but humble access to the Lord's Table: *Domine, non sum dignus.*

This woman addressed Jesus as 'Lord' (*kyrios*). It is the only instance of such an address in St. Mark's Gospel. In the mouth of a pagan it was not a religious but a polite address. It meant no more than 'Sir.'

¶¶ 48 (54). *A Strange Way of Healing.* Mk $7^{31-37}$ ($8^{22b-26}$).

These two versions of a healing at Bethsaida I have sufficiently interpreted by the translation—and in the conclusion of the foregoing synopsis.

But if we are compelled to regard these stories as two versions of the same event, we cannot but wonder that they are so different. This observation is even more disquieting than the discrepancies we discover between the three Synoptic Gospels—and vainly seek to harmonize. For here we are dealing with sources which are earlier even than St. Mark, and the extent of the parallelism we have traced seems to imply written sources. This is the only part of St. Mark's Gospel which seems clearly to imply the use of a written source, and in my judgment it is almost the only part where it does not seem reasonable to think of Peter as the Evangelist's informant. This may be of some solace to us. If in view of this long passage we cannot regard St. Mark as an unimpeachable authority, we are nevertheless not compelled to regard all other parts of his Gospel as no more trustworthy than this. We are still free to attribute

to them whatever value they may be proved to possess. And if this book does not entirely fail of its purpose, it must have the effect of vindicating to them a very great historic value. It must give us some confidence when we remark that, even with respect to the unsatisfactory passage we are now finishing, we have not found the material crumbling in our hands. We found there historical substance, for not otherwise would it have been possible to build up out of fragments misplaced and duplicated a consistent and convincing picture. The picture puzzle exemplifies a species of proof to which students of logical method have not devoted sufficient attention. Yet it is a sort of proof with which we very commonly have to deal, especially in historical studies, and it is often thoroughly convincing. When once the little blocks have been found to fit into a consistent picture we have a satisfying certitude that we have rightly solved our problem. The thing is true because ' it works ' —and that not at all in the sense of Pragmatism, but as absolute truth. (Pragmatism, in fact, cannot be made to ' work ' when it is applied to history.) And when we know that some of the blocks are missing, some are defaced, and some are duplicated, we rest satisfied with an imperfect picture.

I would remark here that we have reason to believe that the *words* of Jesus have been more acutely recorded than his *deeds*. That seems in fact to be the case. And it is natural, because the tendency to exaggerate is natural, and it is easier to exaggerate deeds than words. Simple deeds can easily be exaggerated into miracles, and real wonders into greater ones. But of all words the most difficult to exaggerate are the words of Jesus. One would have to utter greater words than his—and one must be greater than he to do it. If we can note any tendency in the tradition of Jesus' words, it is a tendency to pare them down, take out the sting, and make them trite. When this has been done by one Evangelist or another, and we have opportunity to compare their versions, we are never for a moment at a loss to determine which was the authentic word of Jesus, or the nearest we can come to it. Always it is the strongest, the most disconcerting, the most amazing. We are eager to

discover new words of Jesus in ancient papyri, and disposed to bewail the fact that comparatively few are preserved in our canonical Scriptures. But that is hardly reasonable of us while we allow the words we know to pass unnoticed. When Jesus' words were once recorded in the canonical Gospels it was no longer possible for any one to alter them. But a hundred generations have been at work to render them innocuous, so that now no one of us can rediscover their meaning without intense effort.

As a concluding comment upon this paragraph, which is the end of a long section (§ 6), I would remark that St. Matthew omits *both* of these stories of healing—either because he became aware at last that the accounts were parallel, and felt unable to choose between them, or because he was offended at the magical method of cure. St. Luke's omission of them has no such significance, for he had critical sense enough to detect the parallelism at the beginning and omitted all that follows the first feeding of the multitude up to Peter's confession. That was easier than trying to discriminate. But it did not serve to clarify the history. For by skipping at this point eighty-seven verses (his only serious departure from Mark's narrative) St. Luke failed to observe that there was a period of wandering in the north (of more account than a mere excursion to Bethsaida which he reports) ; so having lost the clue which indicated a definite moment of departure from Galilee, he has no definite moment for the start to Jerusalem. 'He set his face to go up' is the phrase in Lk $9^{15}$ ; but after that we have more than eight chapters about Jesus' doings and sayings in Galilee. This (except for certain reminiscences of the portion of St. Mark which he omitted) is the precious material which St. Luke gathered from other sources than St. Mark (318 verses in all). He threw it all (except Zacchaeus and the parable of the talents) in one lump into the gap which he himself had made in St. Mark's narrative—whereas St. Matthew scattered his new material here and there. It is not until Lk $18^{15}$ (which corresponds to Mk $10^{13}$) that Jesus is definitely on his way to Jerusalem. At that point he had already crossed the border into Judaea, and from that time on St. Luke again follows closely the order of St. Mark.

It was a matter of course, therefore, that in St. Luke's account both the confession of Peter and the Transfiguration were placed in Galilee (Lk $9^{18-43}$). The result is that these critical events seem perfectly unreal, because they provoked no crisis, had no pragmatic consequences of any sort. After they had occurred everything went on in Galilee just as before. Ghostlike, these events cast no shadows. And yet they were real. They were not like the two miracles of the creation of bread and fish, which cast no shadow even in St. Mark's narrative, for the reason that they never really occurred. We are about to see that the Transfiguration and Peter's confession had in fact consequences as profound and far-reaching as we could expect such events to have.

## Section 7. ¶¶ 54–59

## MESSIAHSHIP REVEALED

### Mk $8^{27}$—$9^{29}$

An Excursus in Literary Criticism.

In this section we are not under the necessity of printing the text in parallel columns, for there are no doublets. Nor have we any longer the feeling that we are treading upon unsecure ground, friable rock which yields us no firm footing. Peter is here in the forefront, and may well have been the original narrator. If he did not tell about the Transfiguration and his own 'confession,' we may well wonder if he ever told anything.

Nevertheless, there is a difficult problem in this section. It is no less important than difficult. And in order to deal with it clearly I am compelled to do something more drastic than printing the text in parallel columns. I have to transpose the text. I was loath to do this, till I reflected that, even if I am wrong in my conjectural amendment, I am doing St. Mark no injury. The Bible in millions of copies will still continue to contain St. Mark's text in the order in which he wrote it, or in which at least it was read by St. Matthew and St. Luke. I do not complain against this consequence of the canonization of Holy Scripture, for

in many ways it is obviously an advantage. It has in this place the advantage of leaving me free, as a mere interpreter, to comment upon the text in the order which my interpretation requires.

Here, however, it is not only incumbent upon me to make this apology for dealing so freely with St. Mark's text, I must also offer some justification for it. In reality it is not a theory of my own I am here advocating, but one which Albert Schweitzer first proposed and clearly enough defended in his *Skizze* (*Mystery of the Kingdom*, pp. 175–178). I do not have to quote this passage here, for after the questions we have lately been considering, and in view of the detailed study of the text which is to follow, the case may now be stated more cogently in fewer words.

In the first place, it must be acknowledged that there *is* a problem. To be convinced of that, one has only to hear it stated. As the text now stands, Jesus is far away in the north, in heathen territory, 'the villages of Caesarea Philippi' ($8^{27}$). There it is that Peter comes out abruptly with his opinion of Jesus ('You are the Christ'), and there, 'after six days,' occurs the Transfiguration. That is plausible enough. Both might have occurred in heathen territory as well as anywhere else. But at this same time and place we find Jesus surrounded by a crowd, waiting to hear his teaching and bringing their sick to be healed. Just as if we were in Galilee! That manifestly could not happen in heathen territory. And how could Jesus, when he left Caesarea Philippi to go up to Jerusalem, get rid of such a crowd and pass through Galilee without attracting attention? In one instance the crowd appears in such intimate connection with the Transfiguration that it cannot be separated from it. Jesus encounters the crowd surrounding the nine disciples when he descends with the other three from the hill ($9^{14}$). As this crowd does not belong near Caesarea Philippi, we must infer that the Transfiguration did not belong there either. In fact, there is nothing to identify it with this place except the position it now occupies in the text—the presumption that 'after six days' refers to Peter's confession. In the other instance ($8^{34-38}$) we have a discourse addressed to the multitude immediately

after Peter's confession, but so loosely connected with it that we may imagine it was attracted to its present position by a superficial similarity. After Peter's confession Jesus predicted for himself a violent death, and in this discourse to the people he dwells upon the danger involved in being his disciples. The two subjects accord well together, but similarity does not make them inseparable. And they must be separated, if the crowd is out of place near Caesarea Philippi, and if (as is expressly stated) the confession of Peter was made there.

This is a perfectly objective piece of literary criticism. It is necessary, as soon as the problem is pointed out, to admit that there is confusion here. That conclusion is independent of any preference we may have on other grounds for a particular rearrangement of this passage—a predilection, let us say, for putting the Transfiguration *before* the confession of Peter. Evidently, some rearrangement is necessary, if order is to be brought out of this confusion. But up to this point our criticism is purely negative, and it gives us no assurance that this very necessary rearrangement is also possible.

Here we must resort to another process of reasoning. It is of the picture puzzle order. And the adjustment of the four pieces we have dissected proves easier than we might have expected. We have only to transpose the first piece to the last place—the confession of Peter to the conclusion of the section (therefore *after* the Transfiguration) —and we have a perfectly unimpeachable order.

This conclusion also is solid enough to stand upon its own feet. But our confidence in it must be immensely enhanced when we discover that so slight a rearrangement has the effect of rendering intelligible features which were hitherto obscure in the story of Peter's confession, and of revealing for the first time the substantial significance of the Transfiguration. For this supernatural *mise en scène* has always seemed to us superfluous as a revelation of Jesus' Messiahship to three favoured disciples *after* the secret was already known to the Twelve. The only thing that might weaken the force of this argument is the preposterous suspicion that a partiality for this conclusion (which is

clearly of signal advantage for the interpretation of the Gospel) has prompted us to contrive these specious proofs. But obviously that is not true. I have emphatically called attention to the fact that this is all of it *objective* literary criticism, that both the negative and the positive argument stand on their own feet, and the very obvious fitness of the result cannot reasonably be used to disparage the whole method of argumentation by which we have arrived at it. And there is more proof yet to come of the same sort when we hunt about for a place where we might plausibly put the Transfiguration and the multitude which surrounded Jesus before and after it—and discover that at Bethsaida we are already familiar with the very scenery which now unexpectedly reappears. The same crowd that would not leave Jesus was there to hear his warning about the danger of following him—which now acquires a special aptness. The ' six days ' may well cover the whole period of his sojourn at Bethsaida—from the sacral meal to the Transfiguration. The hill where Jesus spent a night alone in prayer was the place where he led, six days later, his three favourite disciples. And ' the house ' where he was afterwards alone with his disciples was the lodging he had found in Bethsaida. So the little picture we have reassembled with four blocks fits accurately into the big picture—precisely where we had recognized that there was a gap. And there is a still bigger picture into which we have to fit this part which we have now assembled. As we pursue the story we shall see how well it fits. Here we need only remark that between the confession of Peter near Caesarea Philippi and the departure for Jerusalem nothing now intervenes. This revelation to the Twelve was, as we might expect, a decisive moment. Immediately after $8^{33}$ comes $9^{30}$: ' And they went forth from thence and passed through Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it.'

Since it was necessary to argue this matter, I have done it thoroughly. For it is a point of capital importance for the understanding of the story of Jesus. If logicians have not devoted serious attention to the type of proof which is exemplified by the picture puzzle, it is high time they did so. At any rate, they cannot afford to despise it, for it is

a very real proof in its *genre*. It may be difficult to define the method, but the result, if it is attained, is always convincing in the highest degree. It is a proof especially necessary in literary criticism, but it may be detected whereever a scientist cries, Eureka !—that is, wherever a thing is found to *fit*.

I need not apologize for interjecting such argumentation in the midst of an interpretation of the Gospel of St. Mark, for it is as much a part of the interpretation as any other, only in a different manner. Anyone who does not like this sort of thing can perfectly well ignore it, if he is content to accept without proof all that follows.

### ¶ 56. Living Eschatologically.

Mk $8^{34}$–$9^{1}$. **And he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said to them, 'If any one wants to follow along with me, he must renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.**

**[35] For whoever would save his life shall lose it,**
**and whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it.**

**[36] For what advantage is it to a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life ?**

**[37] For what is there that a man would barter for his life ?**

**[38] Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this disloyal and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' [1] And he said to them, '*Amen* I say unto you, there are some among those standing here who will not taste death before they see the coming of God's Kingdom with power.'**

We have seen that as result of literary criticism this discourse, which evidently could not have been addressed to a crowd of would-be disciples in heathen territory, may be ascribed to the days which Jesus passed at Bethsaida. That is, in fact, the nearest point in St. Mark's story to which it can be referred. We have seen that there is a gap in St. Mark's story at that point. He leads us to suppose that Jesus was going to Bethsaida, but the story hardly gets

him there, and nothing is told us to account for the exalted position Bethsaida held among the towns which had witnessed the works of Jesus (Mt $11^{20}$). We have done something to fill up this gap when we have recognized that it was in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida Jesus celebrated with the multitude a symbolical feast, and that there he spent a night of solitary prayer upon a hill overlooking the lake. Bethsaida is still further exalted when we learn that it was there, on that same hill, Jesus appeared transfigured before his three disciples; when we learn that the crowd still lingered at the bottom of the hill, that Jesus effected there a striking cure, and that he and his disciples had lodging in the town. This narrative also speaks of 'six days' as the minimum term of Jesus' stay at Bethsaida. But for all that the picture is not complete. We are told that he showed his compassion by teaching the crowd 'many things' ($6^{34}$). We are justified in expecting that at this time there would appear a new note in his teaching. But we are given no hint what he taught—unless this discourse which we are about to study belongs at Bethsaida, as so much circumstantial evidence suggests. And in fact it is seen to *fit* here. It *does* strike a new note, and I can think of no place in the whole story where it would be equally appropriate. At that moment nothing could be more wholesome than the stern warning Jesus gave to the excited multitude which was expecting at any moment to enjoy supernatural blessings, following their Elijah into the Kingdom of God. The chosen disciples needed such teaching as much as any others. Even on the way to Jerusalem they were discussing which of them should be greatest in the Kingdom ($9^{34}$), what reward they should have ($10^{28}$), what sort of thrones (Mt $19^{28}$), which should sit on his right and which on his left ($10^{37}$).

So 'he called the crowd to him along with his disciples.' He had something now to say which was new even to the disciples. It was, in fact, the first time he had ever spoken of the danger that was involved in following him—a danger not only of suffering but of death. He spoke of the danger impending over his disciples before he had given any hint of the danger he anticipated for himself. But we cannot

doubt that he expected as the leader to bear the brunt of the danger. In fact, he never spoke of danger as threatening him. He spoke only of the certainty of his death. His only doubt was, how many of his followers might be involved in his fate. In the garden of Gethsemane he thought only of the Three as in serious danger of 'temptation' ($14^{38}$). In fact, Jesus died alone!

At Bethsaida everybody wanted to 'follow' Jesus—right into the Kingdom! He told them what following meant: 'If any one wants to follow along with me, he must renounce himself and take up his cross—and (*literally*) follow me.' I do not know whether 'to take up a cross' was a proverbial expression which would be understood by the people as a symbol for the last extremity of suffering. I do not know whether Jesus at that time looked forward to crucifixion as the mode of his death. That would involve a precise anticipation of what happened at Jerusalem, for that was the Roman mode of execution. I do not know whether this phrase, so significant to a Christian, may not have been employed here by the Evangelist as a brief but telling equivalent for some other phrase which Jesus actually used here to make clear to the people what a tragic seriousness there was in this 'following' which they took so lightly. What *they* understood, and what *we* now need to make clear to ourselves, is, that 'to follow Jesus' did not mean a mystical *imitatio Christi*. It meant more than imitation —and also something less. For it was only in a very small measure the disciples could presume to imitate Jesus. Only in his humility did Jesus require his disciples to imitate him: 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart' (Mt $11^{29}$). That did not mean a lowly opinion of one's self, but readiness to serve others, the attitude of a willing servant. 'Yoke and burden' are symbols of that attitude. 'The Son of Man came to serve and [as his last service] to give his life a ransom for many' ($10^{45}$). Not many have been required to imitate him in that lowest-highest expression of humility.

And yet that was the expectation he held out to the would-be followers at Bethsaida. It was a matter of life and death! Such a warning must have been a strong

deterrent to all . . . except the courageous. The demand for courage was no new note in Jesus' teaching. We have heard it before. Faith and courage are correlative. But here Jesus justifies 'living dangerously.' 'Whosoever would save his life shall lose it.' The only safety is in courage. 'Risk all to gain all.' I wonder that I remember just one sentence from a translation of the Odyssey which I read more than forty years ago—I think it was Andrew Lang's part, but I forget who was the hero that said to a younger warrior, 'If keeping back would keep back death from us, that we should now wrack in this rough human sea at all, neither would I have gone forth to fight with the foremost, nor would I urge thee to enter the glorious conflict.' Just so—'He who would save his life shall lose it'—for 'a thousand fates of death wait over us always.' I run the risk of losing my life, says the fearful man. No, says Jesus, the *risk* is that you may not be reckless enough to lose it. For 'whosoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it.' There is no risk there. Regarding life as a whole, you sacrifice a part and save it *all*—because the part apparently lost was nobly thrown away. That is what it is to *live*! Regarding life as a whole, as really *life* (the amazing mystery!), what can be compared to it: 'What advantage is it to a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? what is there that a man would barter for his life?' The individual life as a whole—and 'the whole world.' The *whole* world seems a tremendous weight to throw into the balance, and yet it does not tip it. We are hardly capable any longer of entertaining the conception of *gaining* the whole world. Is our world too big, or are we too small? They could still conceive of such a thing in the Middle Ages—and were ambitious enough to seek after it. That, and no less than that, was the temptation of Doctor Faustus—and of every man who sought the philosopher's stone. That was what was offered to Jesus as his temptation (Mt $4^8$), 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.' No such temptation comes to dazzle us—but we ignominiously succumb when some tiny fraction of the world is offered to us, some paltry advantage, some vain pleasure. Big business seems very big to us.

Some little political office is our substitute for the nobler ambition to be a king, and some covet even a position of eminence in the Church. 'Every man has his price,' and the pity of it is that the price is commonly so low a one. And all the while we assent to Jesus' dictum that even the whole world is not big enough to be bartered in exchange for a man's life. Who is so foolish? You?—I confess I am thinking chiefly of myself.

Jesus had a way of discouraging would-be followers. He was certainly no proselytizer! St. Luke lumps together three blunt rebuffs or discouragements: 'Foxes have holes, . . . Let the dead bury their own dead. . . . No man who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God' (Lk $9^{57-62}$). In these sayings he proposes hardships and requires resolution, but he does not yet hint at such tragic danger as he gives warning of at Bethsaida.

But if it is dangerous to follow, it appears still more dangerous not to follow—if not to follow means to turn away from Jesus with disdain. For 'whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this disloyal and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' 'This disloyal and sinful generation'!—but, of course, Jesus is not thinking of *us*, for we know that he thinks us all 'too good to be damned.' Nevertheless we are surprised to hear him using such expressions, for *we* believe that he had a very high idea of humanity. But it is more important to note that in this passage Jesus' personality is thrust into the foreground—'ashamed of *me* and of *my* words.' Hitherto we have heard nothing like this in the speeches of Jesus—except in his reply to the messengers of the Baptist (Mt $11^{6}$). That was indeed very like it: 'Blessed is he who finds no occasion of offence in me.' That was all that was required for blessedness! He did not require that any one should believe in him, for he did not vouchsafe to disclose what men ought to believe about him. So it is here still. He speaks of the Son of Man in the third person. If anyone had begun to suspect that he himself might be the Son of Man, this would be enough to put them off the track. Openly he claims only a mysterious solidarity with the Son

of Man. If anyone is ashamed of Jesus, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed. That is a warning. But it also implies a comfortable assurance to brave followers who cast away their lives for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel. For if such a solidarity exists, Jesus' followers are assured of the favour of the Son of Man.

If the people took Jesus to be the expected Elijah, they could readily understand that the Messiah would make common cause with him. Son of Man was not a title that would mystify the people. They all of them knew that it meant the Messiah. It is only we that are mystified by it. And from Baldensperger to Charles, all the students of Jewish apocalyptic conspire to enlighten us that this was a well-known designation of the Messiah. And it is only we who wonder when we learn here that the father of this Son of *Man* was not a man at all but God—' he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' From Daniel to Enoch, the being who is described as ' like unto a son of man ' was still more like unto the angels.

I am not ashamed of Jesus and of his words—not even when they are apocalyptic in their colouring. That is very little to boast of, and I do not know whether that is a sufficient plea for the favour of the Son of Man—whether from his assertion I dare infer that he will not be ashamed of me, just for this small cause, and in spite of the fact that I am not one of the courageous and ' violent ' men who risk their lives for the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. And I confess I do not understand all of Jesus' words. As, for example, this one which he utters with solemn emphasis : ' *Amen* say I unto you, there are some among those standing here who will not taste death before they see the coming of God's Kingdom with power.' The coming of the Kingdom ' with power ' clearly means its eschatological realization. I cannot put myself off with the notion that this prophecy was fulfilled by the Resurrection of Jesus, or by the day of Pentecost, or by anything that has ever happened in the Church. What Jesus meant to say here he said again, in the eschatological discourse to the disciples ($13^{26}$) and before the high priest ($14^{62}$)—with more picturesque detail—and again in his vivid (terrifying and consoling) picture of the

great assize (Mt $25^{31-46}$). That last judgment has not yet been held, the Son of Man has not yet appeared on the clouds, the Kingdon of God has not yet come with power, and we go on praying for its coming, as our Lord taught us to do. When these words were written down by the Evangelists the generation that had heard them uttered had almost passed away, and men were beginning to ask (2 Pet. $3^{4}$), 'Where is the promise of his coming?' Yet the Evangelists had the courage to inscribe them in the Gospels! With all the more emphasis, perhaps, because they were called in question: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away' ($13^{31}$). That they 'will not taste death *before*' the coming of the Kingdom means, I suppose, that they will not taste it at all—they will be 'changed,' as St. Paul represents (1 Cor. $15^{51}$). In the course of two thousand years not one of Jesus' disciples has been 'changed' *phenomenally*, except by death. Schweitzer thinks that these words which appear to us too strong have been toned down by the Evangelist. He thinks that instead of saying 'there are *some* among those standing here' who will not die, Jesus must have said, 'You who hear me now.' But that is impossible after he had given such solemn warning that those who were bold enough to follow him were likely to encounter death. I see more reason to suppose that Jesus' words were exaggerated by the perfervid imagination of his hearers. And we cannot get rid of another saying which could not be exaggerated and which no devout Christian would lightly have ascribed to the Lord: 'But of that day and that hour no one knows anything—not even the angels, not even the Son, but only the Father.'

But I have no doubt that Jesus solemnly impressed upon these people (as did St. Paul in 1 Thess. $5^{1-11}$) that they were living on the very edge of another world. *That* was to live dangerously!—*on the very edge!* Beyond that edge it was not death that threatened, but *life*. Think of it! Just across that line ('in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye'), *life*, real life! Who could live as he had before—with *life* so imminent? Death is not beyond that edge, but on this side of it. It is our all-too-possible possibility.

Beyond it is the impossible possibility, ' the powers of the world to come.'

These are not the only sayings of Jesus which give us the impression of standing on the edge. There are first of all the Beatitudes (Mt $5^{1-12}$; Lk $6^{26}$)—especially in St. Luke's version, which is supposed to be the most authentic report and is certainly the most eschatological.

' Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God !
Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied !
Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh !
Blessed are you when men will hate you, when they will excommunicate you and denounce you and spurn the name you bear as evil on account of the Son of Man : rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for, behold ! your reward is great in heaven—for that is the way their forefathers treated the prophets.
But alas for you who are rich, for you *have* all the comfort you will ever get !
Alas for you who have your fill now, for you will be hungry !
Alas for you who laugh now, for you will weep and lament !
Alas for you when all men speak well of you, for that is the way their forefathers treated the false phophets.'

These words were spoken on a mountain. Was it the same mountain we have grown familiar with near Bethsaida ? At all events they are uttered in the tone of that time. There is nothing like eschatology (standing on the edge) for ' the revaluation of all values.' And what comes next in St. Luke's Sermon on the Mount is also uttered in plain vision of the world to come : ' I tell you my hearers : love your enemies, treat well those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To a man who strikes you on one cheek offer the other also, and from a man who takes away your cloak do not keep back your shirt either. To every one who asks you give, and from a man who takes anything of yours do not demand it back. As you would like to have men treat you, so you must treat

them. And if you love those who love you, what merit have you? For even "sinners" love those who love them. And if you help those who help you, what merit have you? Even "sinners" do that. If you lend only to people from whom you hope to get something, what merit have you? Even "sinners" lend to "sinners" to get a full return. *You* must love your enemies, and help them and lend to them without expectation of return—and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind even to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged yourselves. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and they will give to you—good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, they will pour into your lap. For the measure you use with others, they in turn will use with you' (Lk $6^{27-38}$).

These precepts, we rightly feel, are exorbitant—except for people who are standing on the edge of eternity. It is significant that this 'sermon' concludes (Mt $7^{24-27}$; Lk $6^{47-49}$) with the parable of a house built on the sand. The edge crumbles! Jesus would warn us. In fact, the obligation to love our enemies is an eschatological precept. It is a part of our fearless living on the brink of eternity. Men may be said to 'live dangerously' (it is, of course, Nietzsche's word) when they live recklessly within sight of death—and get a thrill out of it. But we get a greater thrill living boldly right on the brink of *life*. We dare live recklessly on that account. We get one sort of a thrill by killing an enemy, and another sort when we forgive him. Such is the significance of other words which Matthew incorporates in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt $6^{19-34}$) and Luke reports in another connection (Lk $12^{22-34}$): 'Therefore, I tell you do not worry about life, wondering what you will have to eat, or about your body, wondering what you will have to wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.' Think of the birds! . . . Think of the flowers! . . . All this we rightly consider very poetical, but hardly reflect that it is an incitement to reckless, eschatological living, in contrast to the timorous, careful ways of

'the nations of the world.' 'Your Father knows that you need these things. Only seek his Kingdom, and these things will be given you besides. Do not fear, little flock.' *That* is the word for eschatological living, *fearlessness*. Therefore other words reported by St. Luke (12[4–12], and by Mt 19[28–33]) belong here too: 'But I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. . . . Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight! But the very hairs of your head are all counted! Fear not. You are worth far more than sparrows. I tell you, Whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God; and he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.' It is surely not extravagant to suppose that these words were uttered at Bethsaida. They agree amazingly with our text. And Luke (14[25–27]) reports other words which show an even more striking agreement: 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters—yes, and his own life also—cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.'

The fact that these sayings which I have collected here are scattered up and down in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke does not afford any presumption that they were not uttered at the same place and time. It is a theory generally accepted that for all of the sayings I have here quoted these two Evangelists depended upon a source ('Q') which contained little more than the *sayings* of Jesus (with scant hints of the circumstances in which they were uttered) and made no pretence of reporting them in chronological order. Therefore, until we reach the Jerusalem days, where the other Evangelists follow Mark closely, we cannot trust the order in which they report the sayings of Jesus. Evidently, they introduced them haphazard into the historical framework furnished by Mark. It cannot be too much insisted upon that St. Mark's chronology, value it as we may, is the only chronology we have. I believe that our study hitherto must persuade us that we should value it highly. And it seems to me that St. Mark has placed

approximately where they belong such discourses as he reports. And if we are right in assigning to Bethsaida the text we are here commenting on, the other sayings I have cited from ' Q ' are necessarily attracted there with it. It should be noted that I have not put these sayings together because they deal with the same topics (for the topics, in fact, are various), but because they have the same intonation. Judging by St. Mark's narrative, that is a tone which was not heard before Jesus left Galilee. After that, and until he had crossed the border of Judaea ($10^{1}$), we have no hint that he taught anywhere except at Bethsaida. This is the first time an effort has been made to co-ordinate the scattered sayings of Jesus with reference to the historical data furnished by St. Mark. Perhaps there is no period where this is possible except the critical days at Bethsaida and the last days at Jerusalem.

Looking back at the group of sayings I have ventured to collect here, you will perhaps begin to suspect that all this is what has been called ' interim ethics.' That is the fact. And moreover it comprises pretty much all the interim ethics there is to be found in the Gospel. For this term would not be distinctive at all if it included all the norms of ethical conduct which, while they are appropriate to the conditions of this life, have no relevancy to the world to come. That can be said of all practical ethics. ' Thou shalt not commit adultery ' is not appropriate to the Kingdom of God, where ' they neither marry nor are given in marriage ' ; ' Thou shalt not kill ' is irrelevant to immortals —and so on. The term ' interim ethics ' properly applies only to those ideals of conduct which would be natural, and would naturally be approved, in view of the approaching end of the world. That is the reason why every one resents Schweitzer's use of this term to describe the character of the most distinctive ethical teaching of Jesus. Such teaching as that at Bethsaida (and all the rest which I have ventured to associate with it) is not more appropriate to the Kingdom of God than is the ordinary, unheroic morality. It is in fact more obviously inappropriate, because the conduct prescribed for us now (in this interim) is expressly contrasted with what we have to expect in the Kingdom of God.

Here we serve with Christ, there we shall reign with him. No place left here for meekness! This we can bear, for it means only that Jesus' ethical teaching suffers the same limitation as all other ethics. But this term seems to imply a far more serious limitation. It seems to imply that Jesus' most distinctive ethical teaching has no place in this world either—no place at least that we know anything about. It was formulated for the brief interim between Jesus' appearance and the end of the world. But this world did not then come to an end, and even now we see no signs of its being near. Therefore ethical norms appropriate to the last days can have no pertinence to us. If this is the fact, it is futile to dispute about a name. 'Interim ethics' simply denominates this fact.

I cannot dispute this fact. But there is still something more to be said about it.

We are fain to believe that the ethical norms we revere are absolute—valid for all places and for all time. That, we have seen, is not so—they are not valid for the Kingdom of God. When we speak of absolute ethics we can mean no more than that the common rules of conduct which men follow, or even in transgressing approve, are evidently appropriate to man in the conditions under which he now lives. But even such relative absoluteness cannot be affirmed of the most distinctive moral precepts of Jesus. The necessity of forgiving one's enemies and of giving up one's life for the sake of the Gospel (to mention only two examples) cannot be deduced from the nature of the genus Homo and the character of his physical environment. Must we then conclude that they are worthless? Who will venture to say so? It is precisely these sayings of Jesus which exercise the greatest fascination even for those who do not accept or follow them. They have *almost* their vote to be true if they can. And no wonder. For they are on a par with all other heroic ideals—which likewise cannot be necessarily deduced from the nature of man and his environment, cannot be proved to be advantageous, and nevertheless are felt to be absolutely good. It would seem then that the only absolute morality is a kind that cannot be justified by reasoning. It is futile to justify heroism by reference

to the greatest good of the greatest number, for that implies a motive (not to say a calculation) which never prompted an heroic act. Self-sacrifice may be prompted by regard for the good of determinate persons, or for the advantage of some cause, or for the mere glory of God ; but in every heroic act we detect (and therefore we revere it) a presentiment of the eternal in the temporal. There, again, we are *on the brink* !

I count it reasonable to believe that such precepts as these of Jesus could not have been so sharply and so trenchantly formulated except in view of the apocalyptic expectation. Plato's high-flown idealism did not prompt him to comparable utterances. Thinking of his ideal Republic, he could speak only in general terms of the conduct becoming a man in the interim before its realization : ' But even if there is no such city, he who has had a vision of it will henceforth walk according to its laws and no others.' Idealism knows no ' brink,' no imminent threat of a new life. The attempt to justify Jesus' distinctive moral precepts results only in falsifying them. They are necessarily falsified when they are made to fit into some scheme of obviously advantageous behaviour. For then they lose their heroic quality—that is to say, they lose their inherent and self-evident justification. The value of these heroic precepts of Jesus does not depend exclusively upon the range of ideas which prompted them and made them acceptable to those who first heard them—in so far as they *were* acceptable then. We may ask if they were not as unacceptable then as now. They seem to have been uttered as a deterrent to would-be followers. We can be sure that all were not deterred by them, for danger only fascinates the brave. Nevertheless the story makes it plain that Jesus' peculiar precepts were not always acceptable to those who were expecting the prompt advent of the Kingdom (10[21, 22]). As it was then, so it is now, when we do *not* cherish such an expectation.

Albert Schweitzer, though he was the discoverer of the thoroughgoing eschatology of the Gospels, is not a believer in eschatology. He affirms that Ritschl's notion of the Kingdom of God—which is the entirely uneschatological

notion we have all accepted—is the only conception possible to the modern man. And yet Schweitzer is living eschatologically in Africa, following literally the precepts of interim ethics. ' Practical eschatology ' is the phrase he used in a letter to me as his apology for going to work as a physician in the most deadly part of Africa, among the least attractive of black men, at the sacrifice of everything that men count dear. It is true, he went there to heal the open sore of the world. His is *practical* eschatology. But so was the eschatology of Jesus. He required no vain sacrifices, senseless asceticism, or any sort of action which is of no benefit to others. He did not counsel would-be disciples to cast away their possessions, but to sell them and give to the poor. (Which makes us suspect that the end he looked forward to was not so near after all.) He could not even bear to think that money (a ' talent ') was hidden away unfruitfully. There is not one of the eschatological precepts of Jesus which would not better the world we live in if it were generally practised. The question is whether the norms of obviously useful conduct which we commonly follow go so far to better things. From the days of Albrecht Ritschl until now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent (' strenuous ' is our word) are seeking to take it by storm. Tower of Babel ! We are very much chagrined to observe that things remain pretty much as they were, so far as human happiness is concerned. And that's the thing we are striving after. We have just finished the greatest war in history, and we are looking for a greater. We are the more vexed at the futility of our efforts because we are conscious that they are prompted by the best of motives. We are not altogether deluded in conceiving that they are Christian motives. The ideal of bettering this world is, in fact, our substitute for the eschatological Kingdom of God. It is no accident that strenuousness in the pursuit of this aim is chiefly observable in Protestant lands. Even big business has been plausibly traced to Calvinism. But at the same time it is recognized that this strange product is a posthumous child of Calvinism : it appears only when Calvinism is dead. That may lead us to suspect that, though the driving force of most of our

efforts to reform the world can be traced to Christian ideals, they are ideals which have become detached from distinctive Christian hope—' homeless ideas,' therefore, which drive us but no longer direct us. It seems as if our poor world were suffering from the misdirected efforts of the wise men who are trying so hard to improve it. We have to confess that prudential calculation has very definite limitations in our intelligence. We have long been decrying other-worldliness as unpractical. But may it not be the thing now most needed for this world? The world is certainly none the worse for the few who are now living eschatologically. ' The salt of the earth ' was Jesus' name for them. And for all its commonplace morality, how rotten this world would be without such people!

Multitudes are living eschatologically—and do not know it! That was Jesus' amazing discovery: ' When did we ever see you hungry, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? When did we ever see you as a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? Or when did we ever see you sick or in prison, and came to you? ' (Mt $25^{37-39}$). Perhaps this multitude is more numerous than the company of those who clearly or obscurely know that they are doing such things for the Son of Man. Among all this *many* who win entrance into the Kingdom (but do not gain it by their merit, for they are simply the ' many ' for whom Christ died) Schweitzer is so appropriate an example to cite here, because he is the inventor of the term ' interim ethics,' by which he seems to disparage Jesus' teaching—and yet . . . he follows it. Being a man of words as well as of deeds, he invents a good name for this ' following ' of Jesus—' practical eschatology.' Like the first disciples who followed Jesus, he is constrained to follow—not knowing who Jesus is, or whence he came, or by what authority he assumes to dispose of a man's life. But being a philosopher, he has also felt constrained (perhaps inconsequently) to invent a system of ethics which would contain and justify (as obviously no previous system did) the heroic precepts of Jesus. Out of that labour there has issued at least another good name: his formulation of the universal maxim of ethics as ' reverence for life.'

But if, for these special reasons, Schweitzer is the most apposite example we could consider here, he is only one among the many who, consciously or unconsciously, follow the Son of Man. Their names need not be mentioned here, for if many are written only in the Lamb's book of life, many are also blazoned on the page of history as conspicuous benefactors of mankind. James Russell Lowell made a telling retort to a man who ' did not believe in foreign missions,' asking to be shown one spot ten miles square on the earth's surface where Christianity was not professed, and where that man would be willing to bring up his children. But if it is true that Christian lands can boast that measure of distinction, it is surely not due to the practice of such conventional morality as we deduce from Jesus' sayings, but to Jesus' sayings themselves in all their extravagance, the eschatological heroism he inspires, his interim ethics.

We must conclude then that these sayings have not lost their significance with the repudiation of apocalyptic imagery. Schweitzer remarks that Jesus himself put an end to *apocalyptic* eschatology. That remark was made in another connection and must be weighed in another place, but it has a certain pertinence here. For it is important here to observe that even Jesus' immediate disciples gradually transmuted their apocalyptic eschatology into unapocalyptic eschatology. That transformation can be made without the loss of any value, if only we preserve, as St. Paul did, a clear sense of a *brink*, a crisis, of ' the arm of the Lord,' of a ' *glory* which shall be revealed in us,' of a *life* which threatens to ' swallow up ' our mortality—and do not chain ourselves again to the dreary wheel of life, the same old thing for ever, only a little more so, the immortality of the soul . . . from which we shall need a new Buddha to deliver us. Then, instead of expecting the day ' when the elements shall melt with fervent heat,' we can say (like St. Paul) ' to depart and be with Christ is far better '—and we are still eschatologists. Even in this oldest Gospel ' life ' ($9^{43, 45}$) and ' eternal life ' ($10^{17, 30}$) are words used by Jesus himself as equivalent to the Kingdom of God. Because they are used in that sense, they denote,

however, much more than a mere prolongation of biological life. But even the 'immortality of the soul' affords a justification of Jesus' heroic morality, if (as in Fechner's view) it assumes that 'we shall be changed.' Robert Browning's Grammarian was an eschatologist.

> Others mistrust and say, 'But time escapes:
> Live now or never!'
> He said, 'What's time? Leave Now to dogs and apes!
> Man has Forever.'

Therefore he had the courage to begin works which could not be finished in this life. Another world is the only justification of any sort of heroism. 'They shall have their reward.'

### ¶ 57. The Transfiguration.

Mk $9^{2-8}$. **Six days afterwards Jesus took Peter, James and John, and led them up a high hill by themselves alone. And he was transfigured in their presence, [3] and his clothes became glistening, exceedingly white, as no earthly bleaching could make them. [4] And Elijah along with Moses appeared to them, and they were conversing with Jesus. [5] And Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is a good place for us to be; so let us put up three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. [6] For he did not know how to respond, they were so frightened. [7] Then a cloud came and overshadowed them, and from the cloud came a voice, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, listen to him.' [8] And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw any one but only Jesus beside them.**

We have come now to one of the decisive moments of Jesus' history, but our comment upon it need not be long. The *words* of Jesus commonly require more comment than happenings or deeds. In this book the length of the commentary is rarely a measure of the importance of the text. Obscurer passages naturally require a fuller comment, while others of incomparably more importance may shine in their own light.

The story of the Transfiguration, when once it is read in

its proper place, needs no explanation to reveal either its importance or its significance. Hitherto, being read in the wrong place, it has seemed to need not only explanation but apology. Coming after the confession of Peter, that is, after the secret of Jesus' Messiahship was already known to the Twelve, the disclosure of this same secret to the Three is so evidently superfluous that we have not been able seriously to regard the Transfiguration as a real event—I do not say an external event, but even an event within the consciousness of the three disciples. Why did Jesus so singularly favour these three, to take them with him alone up a high hill, where they had an amazing and terrifying vision—only to disclose to them what they already knew? And how is it that in the continuation of this story, the colloquy of the disciples as they descended the hill, it is implied that an entirely new idea had been put into their minds, which created a new puzzle for them, the failure of Elijah to come 'first'? And if before this time Peter was able to say, 'You are the Christ,' how did he know it? It seems strange that the Gospels should tell us with so much emphasis and solemnity how this secret was divulgated, but not how it was revealed. Was it impossible to point to a decisive moment when Peter received such a revelation? Or did this discovery not come to him at all by revelation, but rather by his own intuition. Matthew, in his account of the Transfiguration, reports a word of Jesus ($16^{17}$) which we cannot lightly discard: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona [son of John], for flesh and blood did not reveal it unto you, but my father in heaven.' That means that this secret was not a revelation merely of Peter's own 'flesh and blood,' his mystical consciousness. And Peter is not praised for *divulging* this secret at that moment, as we commonly assume, creating an unnecessary contradiction to St. Mark's account. He was 'blessed'—that is, highly favoured—in the fact that he (along with James and John) had received this revelation. Therefore he had no credit for it, and the word about 'the rock on which I will build my Ecclesia' does not apply to the superman Peter (whose conduct so poorly comported with this name, if we may trust his own account of himself, Mk $8^{32, 33}$), but to this

solid rock which there visibly jutted out, the apprehension that Jesus was the Christ.

When we put the Transfiguration first of all, these puzzles vanish, and we have a perfectly congruous account. Unimpeachable I shall venture to call it until some one seriously impugns it on other grounds than the infallibility of the Bible. It was on the hill, in company with James and John, that this secret was revealed to Peter by the heavenly Father. I emphasize again the fact that we have put the Transfiguration first, not as a result of the ' will to believe ' in a solution which is so obviously advantageous, but as the result of a perfectly objective literary criticism, which starts out with the recognition that the crowd which surrounded Jesus immediately before and after the Transfiguration could not have been assembled in heathen territory or be made to fit into the story at any point after the departure from the region of Caesarea Philippi.

*Now* the Transfiguration is seen to be not only real but significant—and the more significant it is, just so much the more real it must appear to us. It appears now almost as important as the baptism of Jesus. With that event it has evident analogies which have always been remarked upon. Both of them are instances of the revelation of Jesus' Messiahship—first to him alone, and then to three chosen disciples. In both instances the secret was disclosed by a vision and by a voice, and between the two announcements there is striking similarity : ' Thou art my Son, my Beloved, on thee rests my favour '—' This is my Son, my Beloved, listen to him.' Hitherto, these very similarities have counted against the reality of the Transfiguration. It could not be otherwise so long as the Transfiguration appeared to be an event without significance and without effect. It could be nothing more than a mythical reflection of the Baptism. But now when we can trace its effects and can perceive that it was the first revelation of Jesus' Messiahship made to any of the disciples, we must regard it very differently. It seems hardly less necessary to us now than was the revelation made to Jesus at his baptism. Necessary in the same way that St. Paul's experience on the way to Damascus is necessary to account

for what he afterwards was. This revelation was made also to St. Paul by means of a vision and a voice. It seems as if we could discover here a rule, that all the decisive revelations of Jesus' Messiahship were accompanied by an ecstatic state and were given as well by vision as by voice. The only other decisive revelation of Jesus' Messiahship (if we do not count the appearances of the Lord after his resurrection—which hardly would be an exception to the rule) is the event on the day of Pentecost. There men had a vision of 'tongues as of fire,' accompanied by a supernatural voice (*glossalolia*).

And what were the effects of the Transfiguration? We have seen that it explains how Peter on a subsequent occasion was able to announce so confidently, 'You are the Christ.' But that is by no means all. The effects were immediate. The disciples, even while they beheld the vision, called Jesus 'Rabbi': when they had heard the voice they knew that this title was utterly inadequate, and the word is not used again except by the traitor. I know that the title 'Teacher' ('Master') means the same thing, and that even according to St. Mark's Gospel the disciples continued to use this term of address. We might say that the Three would be compelled to use it in order not to betray the secret they were charged to keep. But they continued to address him with this customary title even after Caesarea Philippi—even when they assumed that he was King ($10^{35}$), and even to the very end ($13^{1}$). 'Rabbi' was the word of Judas when he kissed him. Jesus in fact seems to have expressed his preference that they should continue to call him by that name ($14^{14}$; *cp.* Mt $23^{8, 10}$). But for all that, it seems to me significant that Mark uses the Hebrew title *Rabbi* only twice, and here is a juncture when it was about to be revealed to the disciples that this title was an absurdity. Peter might well have remembered that he had called him *Rabbi* (part and parcel of his absurdity in suggesting the three booths) just before the Voice amazed them with, 'This is my Son.' And though even after Peter's 'confession' the disciples continued to call Jesus *Rabbi*, just as they continued on the same human terms with him as disciples with their master,

there are clear indications that they felt an unaccustomed awe of him ($9^{32}$, $10^{32}$).

The Transfiguration as an unreal event seems very much in the manner of the Fourth Gospel, and we have wondered why that Evangelist failed to appreciate it. But it was precisely as a real event that the Transfiguration was felt to be incompatible with a Gospel which represented Jesus as always transfigured, as ' manifesting forth his glory ' by the first miracle which he wrought, so that his disciples from the first ' believed in him ' as the Christ, and the opponents disbelieved, not the Gospel, but his clear and constant claim to be the Christ. So this story had to be omitted from the Fourth Gospel. The baptism was also omitted because it too was real, and it was unendurable to admit that there was ever a time when the divine Logos needed to be informed that he was the Son of God.

The element of unreality which attaches to this real event—an event which was real enough to have permanent pragmatic consequences—can readily be appreciated when we connect it with the other events which happened at Bethsaida. We have seen reason to believe that this was a time of the most extravagant eschatological enthusiasm, which even Jesus' sober warnings did not avail to quench. The mysterious symbolical banquet made a profound impression. The disciples themselves were so carried away by the contagious excitement of the crowd that they were rowing about on the lake almost all night, and were so completely ' out of their senses ' that they took Jesus for a ghost. In all the rest of the Gospel there is no counterpart to this. When six days later Jesus took the three disciples up the hill they were well prepared to see the things which are invisible. If any of the sacred heroes of the past were to appear to them, it was a matter of course that they must be Moses and Elijah—possibly also Enoch. For these were the only ones of whom it was fabled that they had not died but been translated to heaven—and might therefore conceivably come back to earth. The return of Elijah was, in fact, ardently expected, as we have already seen. We might imagine that the disciples would consider that this appearance of Elijah constituted the expected ' coming.' It

seems however that they did not; for as they descended from the hill they were puzzling about the saying of the scribes 'that Elijah must come first.' Evidently they discriminated. What they had seen, though it made so deep and terrifying an impression upon them, was not that sort of reality which they associated with the expected coming of Elijah. In short, it was a *vision*—which certainly did not mean to them, and ought not to mean to anybody, that it had no reality. And the Voice which came out of the cloud had the same sort of reality and unreality. Psychologically it might be explained (that is, explained away) by showing that the disciples had long been cherishing a suspicion that Jesus was the Christ, and that in a moment of intense excitement this vague (perhaps subconscious) notion crystallized into a clear conviction, emitting a degree of heat which might account for their hallucination. But this is precisely what cannot be proved from the tradition as it has come down to us—any more than such a thing can be proved plausibly in St. Paul's case, or in the case of the appearances of the risen Lord. We have no hint that they had ever before entertained so preposterous a notion. A moment before they heard the Voice they had called Jesus 'Rabbi.' That Voice at once originated and confirmed their conviction that Jesus was the Christ. It is entirely impertinent for us to inquire what objective element there was in this experience. The disciples, to whom it was a most real experience, had no thought of raising such a question. It was a divine revelation of Jesus' Messiahship —or, as Jesus said, 'my heavenly Father revealed it to you.' It was plainly a more moving experience than the disclosure later, without supernatural intervention, of this same secret to the Twelve. And yet that too was a profound and real experience for them. So real that henceforth everything was changed for them. Not only did they regard Jesus with a new awe, but their minds were continually exercised about the Kingdom of God, what rewards they would enjoy there and what places of importance ('thrones') they should occupy.

Even if Jesus himself did not directly share in this experience of the Transfiguration, he experienced a reflection

of his disciples' experience, and that must have been momentous for him. It must have confirmed him in his purpose of seeking solitude. His disciples, too, had now something very serious to think over. And in fact they departed from that region, so soon as he had liberated himself from the crowd that awaited him at the foot of the hill, went hastily through Galilee on foot, and took refuge in a remote pagan district—as we have seen in studying the story which follows Bethsaida in St. Mark's narrative ($6^{53}$–$7^{37}$, $8^{10-12, 22b-26}$). Only at the end of all this narrative, which implies a very considerable interval, do we come to Caesarea Philippi and Peter's confession, which is soon to engage our attention. It will be seen that when we put the Transfiguration before Peter's confession we put it a long time before, although we put it at the latest moment St. Mark's story permits. As we could only reach step by step the conclusions which justify the rearrangement we have now completed, it was not possible to comment upon the text in the order we have finally established. To make more abundantly plain how consecutive this story is, I shall print at the end of this section the whole text which forms the Second Part of St. Mark's Gospel, following the arrangement we have now arrived at, and omitting only the parallel tradition (pp. 343–349).

¶ 58. Coming Down the Hill.

Mk $9^{9-13}$. **As they went down the hill he enjoined them not to tell any one what they had seen,—until the Son of Man should rise from the dead. [10] They remembered the saying all the more because they discussed with one another what he might mean by 'the rising of the dead.' [11] And they put this question to him: 'Why do the Pharisees and the scribes say that Elijah has to come first?' [12] And he said to them, 'Elijah does come first to reform everything—and does not the Scripture say of the Son of Man that he must suffer much and be rejected? [13] But I say to you that Elijah has already come, and they have done to him as they pleased,—as the Scripture says about him.'**

'He enjoined them not to tell any one what they had seen.' Jesus' Messiahship was a secret which had not

hitherto been divulged to any one and was not even now to be imparted to the other disciples. These are the plain implications of Jesus' injunction to secrecy. They would not be plainer if they had been expressly stated in the text. But they rigorously exclude the notion that by Peter's 'confession' all the disciples had already been informed of this secret before the Transfiguration. We see again that this apparently trifling transposition in Mark's text has cluttered everything up.

'Until the Son of Man should rise from the dead.' That was the limit in time beyond which the secret need not be kept—and could not. Jesus was soberly conscious of the necessary limitations of his earthly mission. It was limited not merely to Israel, but to few in Israel. He must go about unknown and misunderstood, sharing his secret with three men at first, and at the last with twelve. But that did not mean a narrow mission. Jesus was not founding an esoteric cult, a secret society. He himself looked beyond the humble limitations of the days of his 'ministry' and contemplated the universal scope of the Gospel. *That* was not meant for 'many' but for *all*. Therefore he said mysteriously (Mk $4^{22}$):

> 'Nothing is hidden except to be disclosed,
> and nothing is concealed except to be revealed.'

'Therefore what you speak in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you say in the secret chambers shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops' (Lk $12^{3}$). Beyond the Resurrection this secret cannot be kept, 'for like the lightning which flashes across the whole heaven, so shall the Son of Man be *in his day*' (Lk $17^{24}$).

Until he 'shall rise from the dead.' The disciples were not so silly as they seem to us for puzzling about this phrase. They knew very well what the Resurrection meant. They were much clearer about that than we are. It was the great eschatological event which they were expecting. If Jesus had said, 'Until the Resurrection,' they would have discovered no difficulty. But it was not easy to get the meaning of this saying about the Son of Man rising from the dead. That seemed to imply that the Son of Man must die.

But they had no place in their philosophy for the death of the Messiah. That is made clear when he utters the ' first ' prediction of his death, after Peter's confession (8[31, 32]). And what Jesus says now about suffering and rejection falls very far short of a prediction of death. He does not state even this much categorically, but puts it as a query, ' And does not the Scripture say of the Son of Man that he must suffer much and be rejected ? '

Jesus does not say one word here that would help the disciples to resolve their puzzle. They may have adjusted themselves to this strange saying by an assumption like that of St. Paul's, that to be ' raised from the dead ' one need not die but must only be ' changed.' It appears, in fact, that the disciples did not venture to put this question to Jesus. They only ' discussed it with one another.' But they had another question which was puzzling them. Once they were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, they could not but think that the Pharisees and scribes must have made an error in formulating the programme of the Last Days. For they had taught every one to expect that Elijah must come *before* the Messiah. And it seemed evident to them that Elijah had not yet come. The Elijah they had just seen in a vision was not humanly real enough to match their expectation, and John the Baptist was far too human. They had not understood Jesus' mysterious hint (Mt 11[14]), ' If you are willing to receive it, he himself is Elijah, the Coming One.' They had not ears that could hear that.

It proves that on this point Jesus fully agreed with the Pharisees and the scribes : ' Elijah does come first ' as a great reformer. But Jesus knew the Scriptures better than the scribes and could draw up a more complete programme. For do not these same Scriptures say of the Messiah that ' he must suffer much and be rejected ' ? A suffering Messiah ! In fact, the scribes had gathered no inkling of that from the Scriptures. Jesus had learned it (as we discover later) from Isaiah's prediction concerning the suffering Servant of Jahve. We see later that he had learned more than this. He had learned that God's righteous Servant must ' give his *life* a ransom for many ' (10[45]). But now he does not venture to disclose so much to his disciples. He gives only the vague

hint comprised in his strange phrase about rising from the dead, and the query whether the Scriptures did not contain the indication that the Messiah must suffer.

But about Elijah Jesus can affirm that he 'has already come.' He intimates who he is by saying, 'they have done to him as they pleased.' The tragic fate of Elijah still occupies his mind and colours his own prospect. That was a part of the programme which, if it was not foreseen by the scribes, must nevertheless have been foretold. We cannot indicate where Jesus found this indication in the Scriptures. It is enough for us to observe how humbly he relied upon the Bible. We scribes deal with the Bible arrogantly, and so get little from it except our own dogma. We hardly deign to look there for light to guide our footsteps.

¶ 59. The Demoniac Boy.

**Mk 9[14–29]. And as he came towards the disciples he saw a great crowd about them and some scribes arguing with them. [15] And as soon as they saw him the crowd was greatly astonished and ran to greet him. [16] And he asked them, 'What are you discussing with them?' [17] And a man out of the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought to you my son who has a dumb spirit, [18] and whenever it seizes him it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth, and he is wasting away. And I told your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.' [19] He answered them and said, 'O faithless generation, how long must I still be with you? how long have I to bear with you? Bring him to me.' [20] So they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw Jesus it convulsed the boy, and he fell down to the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. [21] And Jesus asked the boy's father, 'How long has he been like this?' And he said, 'From his childhood; [22] and many a time it has even thrown him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, help us, take pity on us.' [23] But Jesus said to him, '"If you can!"—everything can be done for one who has faith.' [24] And at once the father of the boy cried out, 'I have faith—help my lack of faith.' [25] Then Jesus, seeing that the crowd was rapidly gathering, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'You deaf and dumb spirit,**

**I command you, go out of him and never enter him again.' [26] And with a cry and a strong convulsion it went out, and the boy became like a corpse, so that most of them said that he was dead. [27] But Jesus grasped his hand and made him rise, and he stood up. [28] And when he had gone into the house, his disciples being alone with him asked him, 'Why could we not cast it out?' [29] And he said to them, 'Nothing can make this sort come out but prayer and fasting.'**

The longer the account of a miracle, the shorter the comment we need make. And this is the longest and most particular account of a cure St. Mark has given us—perhaps because it is next to the last miracle that he records. The last is the healing of a blind man at Jericho. By our rearrangement of the text the story of the woman near Tyre comes later than this miracle which we have placed near Bethsaida. So also do the twin miracles ($7^{31-37}$, $8^{22-26}$) which we have placed again at this same town. But in any case, the second half of the Gospel recounts only one miracle. Jesus was felt to be a miraculous person, but in Jerusalem no miracle was wrought, no one was cured. It is true that the latter half of the Gospel (Part III in our arrangement) covers a short period of time, but it is the period described in the greatest detail, and without miracles it gives us our most majestic impression of Jesus. Jesus was evidently wise in not encouraging people to regard his miracles as proof of his right to the sublime title of Messiah. But then neither was his moral grandeur sufficient to prove this. The high priest did not recognize his claim—but neither did his Apostles when they all forsook him and fled. There was *one* miracle at Jerusalem—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Without that this miracle-worker would not have been accounted the Christ.

It is commonly believed that the boy whose malady and cure is here so circumstantially described was suffering from epilepsy, rather than from a 'deaf and dumb spirit.' Very likely. Physicians in those days were not more infallible in their diagnosis than they are now. All the more remarkable then that Jesus was able to cure him. And the Evangelist deserves no small credit for describing the

symptoms so accurately that modern physicians can recognize the malady at a glance. We seem to have good ground for believing that the story is true—that the boy was in fact epileptic and was actually healed.

But I have no mind to dwell on such things as this, when the story furnishes us with so many touching details. I remark upon the example of solidarity between a father and a sick son: 'Help *us*, take pity on *us*.' That is a touching phrase. And it is hardly necessary to call attention to that father's cry: 'I have faith—help my lack of faith.' That (to use Coleridge's word) is a saying which 'finds me.' It touches a chord in every man's experience. And yet it would not be easy for a story-teller to invent it. And the exclamation which evoked this reply was characteristic of Jesus: 'If you can!' That was not mere self-confidence. Jesus had had occasion to learn that there were things he could not do. For example, he could cure only a few people at Nazareth because of their lack of faith. I doubt if Jesus needed that lesson to teach him his limitations. But, for all that, he did not conceive that the limitations were narrow. 'Everything can be done for one who has faith.' Ultimately it is faith in God that is needed—and it is that which is commonly lacking. But not lacking in Jesus! He never for a moment wavered in his faith that 'all things are possible with God.' Not even when the Apostles were thrown into consternation by the armed band that came to make him prisoner. 'Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of Angels?' (Mt $26^{53}$). Not even on the Cross, when his God *could* save him but forsook him. If Jesus wrought no miracle in Jerusalem, it was certainly not because he felt impotent. We can imagine that it was because it might have defeated the fulfilment of the Scriptures that he must die (Mt $26^{54}$).

If this father was able to exercise sufficient faith vicariously for his son, why were the disciples who remained at the foot of the hill unable to heal him? It was not a case of 'faith cure': it was a case of cure by Jesus in response to faith. And 'in the house' Jesus explained to his disciples that 'nothing can make this sort come out but

prayer and fasting.' We can well believe that epilepsy is a difficult thing to cure. But is it credible that Jesus ever said such words as these? He who had never admonished his disciples to fast or to pray! I can well believe that he said it at that particular moment, and in this connection it is very illuminating. It implies that he had taken the Three with him to the top of the hill, not to see a vision, but to fast and pray. That makes the vision more plausible. Fasting and prayer are the most appropriate means we can use to prepare us for seeing visions. We can understand also that Jesus, coming down from the hill refreshed by his vigil and by the vision, felt able to cure even this grave malady.

Even more worthy of remark, though it is not often remarked upon, is Jesus' sudden betrayal of his homesickness: 'O faithless generation, how long must I still be with you, how long have I to bear with you?' We are in a measure prepared for this by what we have learned of his reasons for leaving Galilee. He had had enough of Galilee. Not that he was tired of country life, where every prospect pleases, but of the people—these very people he had come to save. I have lived enough among peasants to understand that. Artless children of nature they seem to the sentimentalist, but one learns before long that they are all-too-human. Perhaps Jesus felt a longing to know the better society in Jerusalem, where there must have been many persons of culture and refinement. But no, he had no delusions—about men, at least. It was his whole generation which he found unendurable—the whole of mankind, we must suspect, in all its generations, including our own. This very mankind which he had come to save! Where, then, did this man want to go? The answer is not doubtful, even if it is amazing. If heaven was not his native land, he nevertheless thought of it as his home. He starts for Jerusalem with no hope of earthly success, no wish for it even, but with a profound nostalgia for his heavenly Father and the holy angels.

But he does not start yet for Jerusalem, according to our rearrangement of the text. He passes first through Galilee and finds relief from people by remaining unknown in pagan

territory. After a stay there (or a wandering) of unknown duration he returns to the north end of the lake, performs another cure there, and only after Peter's confession in the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi does he start definitely for Jerusalem.

¶ 55. 'You are the Christ.'

Mk 8$^{27-33}$. **Then Jesus and his disciples went away to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he inquired of his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' 28 They replied to him, 'That you are John the Baptist, though some say Elijah, and others say that you are one of the prophets.' 29 And he inquired of them, 'But you, who do you say that I am?' Peter replied to him, 'You are the Christ.' 30 He commanded them not to say this about him to any one. 31 Then he explained to them for the first time that the Son of Man must endure much suffering and be rejected by the elders and the high priests and the scribes, and be killed, and rise again three days after. 32 He said this thing openly. And Peter took him aside and began to reprove him for it. 33 But he, turning about and noticing his disciples, reproved Peter, telling him, 'Get out of my sight, Satan! for your way of thinking is not God's but man's.'**

Whether we put this story before or after the Transfiguration, it comes after the end of the Galilean period, and standing there it gives the lie to all the popular lives of Jesus combined from Matthew, Luke, and John. Jesus had finished his labours in Galilee before any one suspected that he was the Christ or in any sense pretended to that title. How absurd it is then to dispute as to whether he did or did not endeavour to educate the people to a more refined and 'spiritual' conception of what his Messiahship meant! Instead of being gradually led up to the very rational conception which we moderns like to entertain, the people left to themselves, and without any clear instruction from Jesus, cherished the most irrational conceptions—that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead, or Elijah returned from the other world. The more sober among them thought that he was a figure like one of the old prophets they had

read about in the Bible. And Jesus' question, 'And you, what do you say that I am?' implies that it was at least doubtful whether the twelve disciples (or all of them) had yet apprehended that he was the Christ. At this late date, when he had left Galilee and was about to go up to Jerusalem, with barely two weeks of life before him! It is superfluous to say that the Fourth Gospel cannot be reconciled with this fact. For it represents that at the beginning the Baptist proclaimed Jesus as the Christ, that he made openly the same claim for himself, and that from first to last the question which divided the people was whether he was or was not what he claimed to be. Instead of that we learn here that such a question had never been raised, even in the circle of his intimate disciples.

How then did Peter know that Jesus was the Christ? It was characteristic, say the biographers, of Peter's swift intuition. Not very swift, it would seem, if he did not reach this conclusion till near the end of Jesus' life. And why may not Matthew's story be trusted (Mt $16^{17}$), which ascribes this knowledge, not to an intuition of 'flesh and blood,' but to a revelation from God? If there is anything in that, we must hunt around for the occasion when such an important revelation was made to him. And we shall be amazed to discover that there is no report of it—unless it was at the Transfiguration. But in the text of St. Mark (and therefore of the other Synoptists) the Transfiguration comes *after* this confession and is therefore entirely superfluous. All the more so because at the Transfiguration this revelation was made only to the Three, whereas by Peter's confession it had already been made known to all the Twelve. That is the fix we are in. But we have seen that for other and perfectly objective reasons the Transfiguration must be placed before Peter's confession—and thereby all this puzzle is resolved. Then both the Transfiguration and the confession of Peter become profoundly significant—are seen, in fact, to be epoch-making events.

And with this much else is explained—down to slight details of the story which hitherto we have been able to make nothing of. Why did Peter take Jesus 'aside' when he rebuked him? The motive of his rebuke is clear enough.

Peter was offended by this prediction that the Son of Man must be ' killed.' That was not contained in the revelation Jesus made to the Three after the Transfiguration. We have seen that when Jesus spoke of being ' raised from the dead ' they were puzzled by the expression, but were by no means compelled to entertain the notion that the Messiah must first die in order to partake in the general resurrection. The death of the Messiah was indeed an impossible notion for them, and remained so to the end—until the Resurrection. The death of the Messiah—a death, moreover, by violence—was utterly incompatible with the glorious hopes which had been raised in Peter by the experience of the Transfiguration. He and Jesus had this secret together which was not shared by nine of the Apostles. Therefore, before rebuking Jesus for his failure to understand the significance of the divine revelation he had received on the mountain of the Transfiguration, Peter took him aside, so that the others would not hear what was said. That was easy to do when they were walking along the road. But Jesus, ' turning about and *noticing his disciples* ' who had moved near to listen, could not carry on the conversation without betraying the secrets of that strange experience, and limited himself to a sharp rebuke of Peter : ' Get out of my sight, Satan ! for your way of thinking is not God's but man's.' Peter now was tempting him with human ideals of glory, just as Satan had done in the wilderness.

Is it possible that Peter told such a story on himself ? We might think not—except that it is more clearly impossible that any one else would have told it on him. It has often been wondered why the Gospels contain so many stories disparaging to Peter. Why are these stories told about Peter alone ? Did none of the other Apostles say foolish things and need to be rebuked ? These stories appear in an amiable light, if we may suppose that Peter told them on himself, he being the narrator whom Mark reports in all such instances. The Evangelists could repeat these stories without offence *after Peter's martyrdom.* It was then a comfort to every Christian to know that one so like themselves, so very human, had proved himself in the end a hero, giving his life for the sake of the Son of Man

and the Gospel. In his death he proved himself to be the 'Rock' Jesus had named him, though in all his life there was nothing that seemed to justify that name. If Peter was the narrator of this story in which he plays so prominent a part, we need not wonder that the merest details of it are so significant. And if Peter did not tell this story, what other story was he likely to have related?

If Peter told such stories on himself, he was not likely to report the words St. Matthew records: 'You are singularly favoured, Simon Bar-Jonah, for it is not flesh and blood that has revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.' Therefore Peter's omission of this saying does not throw any suspicion upon it. It would be hard for us to believe that Jesus did not say it, now that we can perceive how justly it describes the way Peter came to this knowledge on the mountain of the Transfiguration. Neither can we suspect any more the words which follow: 'You are "Rock," and on *this* rock will I build my Ecclesia.' Only, with this context the notion of Simon as the rock foundation of the Church does not comport at all. That rock must be the truth, the Messiahship of Jesus. If Jesus did not say that, it is none the less true.

Peter was not rebuked for revealing the secret, in spite of the fact that he had been commanded not to tell it to 'any one.' It seems as if Jesus' question was meant to elicit such a reply from one of the Three and released them from their pledge of secrecy. And it is plausible to suppose that at this last moment before starting to Jerusalem Jesus desired to inform all his disciples of this secret. However, it was still to be confined to the Twelve: 'He commanded them not to say this about him to any one.' Only when this secret was known could Jesus 'explain to them *for the first time* that the Son of Man must endure much suffering, and be rejected by the elders and the high priests and the scribes, and be *killed, and rise again three days after*.' What the resurrection of the dead might mean was now clear enough, and the 'three days' is a datum which now first appears. 'He said this thing openly,' *i.e.* to all—before Peter 'took him aside.'

Everything was now ready for the journey to Jerusalem,

which, according to our arrangement, follows immediately upon this significant incident (Mk $9^{30}$) : ' And they left there and passed through Galilee, and he did not wish any one to know it. . . .''

But with that begins the Third Part of our story.

The text of the whole of the Second Part is appended here.

## TEXT OF THE SECOND PART OF THE GOSPEL

### Mk $6^{14}$—$9^{29}$

Rearranged and with Parallel Tradition Omitted

Mk $6^{14-52}$. **And king Herod heard about Jesus, for his name had become well known, and he said, ' John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are working in him.' Others said, ' He is Elijah.' Others again, ' He is a prophet, like one of the old prophets.' But when Herod heard these opinions he said, ' The very John whom I beheaded is risen.'**

**For this Herod had sent and arrested John and put him in prison under chains, on account of Herodias the wife of his brother Philip, because he was married to her. For John had said to Herod, ' You have no right to have your brother's wife.' So Herodias had a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but was unable to do so because Herod stood in awe of John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, so he protected him. He was much perplexed when he listened to him, and yet he found pleasure in listening to him. But a favourable occasion occurred when Herod gave a feast on his birthday to his chief officials and the notables of Galilee, and the daughter of this Herodias came in and danced, so delighting Herod and his guests that the king said to the girl, ' Ask me anything you like, and I will give it to you.' And he swore to her, ' Whatever you ask I will give you—up to half of my kingdom.' So she went out and said to her mother, ' What shall I ask for ? ' And she said, ' The head of John the Baptist.' Then she returned at once to the king and made her request, ' I want you to give me right away on a dish the head of John the Baptist.' The king was much**

distressed, but for the sake of his oaths and his guests he did not like to refuse her, so at once he sent a guard with orders to bring his head. And he went and beheaded John in prison and brought his head on a dish and gave it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. And when his disciples heard of it they went and took his body away and laid it in a tomb.

And the disciples gathered together about Jesus and reported all that they had done and taught. Then he said to them, ' Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest awhile.' For there were many people coming and going, so that they had no leisure even to eat. So by themselves they set off in a boat to go to a secluded place.

However, many people saw them leaving and hurried on foot from all the villages and got ahead of them. So when he got out he saw a large crowd, and his heart was touched by them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he proceeded to teach them many things. Then as it grew late his disciples came up to him and said, ' This is a solitary place, and it is getting late. Dismiss the people so that they may go about to the farms and villages to buy themselves something to eat.' But he replied, ' Give them some food yourselves.' And they said to him, ' Are we to go out and buy forty dollars worth of bread and give them that to eat ? ' But he said to them, ' How many loaves have you ? Go and see.' And when they had found out they told him, ' Five, and two fish.' Then he gave orders to them that all the people were to lie down in parties on the green grass. And they threw themselves down in groups of a hundred and of fifty. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven he said the blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before them, and divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were filled, and the fragments which were picked up (including the fish) filled twelve baskets. And the number of men who ate the loaves was five thousand.

Then he made his disciples get into the boat at once and cross before him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

And when he had taken leave of the crowd he went up on the hill to pray. And when evening was come the boat was far out in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land.

And when he saw that they were driven helplessly, for the wind was contrary to them, about the fourth watch of the night he went to them, walking on the sea, intending to join them. But when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost and screamed aloud. For all of them saw him and were terrified. He, however, at once spoke to them. 'Courage!' he said, 'It is I, do not be scared.' And he got into the boat with them, and the wind fell. And they were quite out of their senses,—for they had not understood about the loaves, for their mind was hardened.

Mk $8^{34}$–$9^{29}$. And he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said to them, 'If any man wants to follow along with me, he must renounce himself and take up his cross and literally follow me.

For whoever would save his life shall lose it,
and whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it.
For what advantage is it to a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?
For what is there that a man would barter for his life?

Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this disloyal and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' And he said to them, '*Amen* I say unto you, there are some among those standing here who will not taste death before they see the coming of God's Kingdom with power.'

Six days afterwards Jesus took Peter and James and John and led them up a high hill by themselves alone. And he was transfigured in their presence, and his clothes became glistening, exceedingly white, as no earthly bleaching could make them. And Elijah along with Moses appeared to them, and they were conversing with Jesus. And Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is a good place for us to be; so let us put up three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.' For he did not know how to respond, they were so frightened. Then a cloud came and overshadowed them, and from the cloud came a voice, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, listen to him.' And suddenly looking around, they no longer saw any one but only Jesus beside them.

As they went down the hill he enjoined them not to tell any one what they had seen,—until the Son of Man should rise from the dead. They remembered the saying all the more because they discussed with one another what he might mean by ' the rising from the dead.' And they put this question to him : ' Why do the Pharisees and the scribes say that Elijah has to come first ? ' And he said to them, ' Elijah does come first to reform everything—and does not the Scripture say of the Son of Man that he must suffer much and be rejected ? But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they have done to him as they pleased,—as the Scripture says about him.

And as he came towards the disciples he saw a great crowd about them and some scribes arguing with them. And as soon as they saw him the crowd was greatly astonished and ran to greet him. And he asked them, ' What are you discussing with them ? ' And a man out of the crowd answered him, ' Teacher, I brought to you my son who has a dumb spirit, and whenever it seizes him it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth, and he is wasting away. And I told your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.' He answered them and said, ' O faithless generation, how long must I still be with you ? how long have I to bear with you ? Bring him to me.' So they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw Jesus it convulsed the boy, and he fell down to the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked the boy's father, ' How long has he been like this ? ' And he said, ' From his childhood ; and many a time it has even thrown him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, help us, take pity on us.' But Jesus said to him, ' "If you can ! "—Everything can be done for one who has faith.' And at once the father of the boy cried out, ' I have faith—help my lack of faith.' Then Jesus, seeing that the crowd was rapidly gathering, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ' You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, go out of him and never enter him again.' And with a cry and a strong convulsion it went out, and the boy became like a corpse, so that most of them said that he was dead. But Jesus grasped his hand and made him rise, and he stood up. And when he had gone into the house, his disciples being alone with him asked him,

'Why could we not cast it out?' And he said to them, 'Nothing else can make this sort come out but prayer and fasting.'

Mk $6^{53}$–$7^{37}$. And crossing to the land they went to the region of Gennesaret and moored the boat. And as soon as he left the boat the people recognized him and hurried all over the country-side and began to bring the sick on their mattresses wherever they heard that he was. And whatever village or town or farm he went to, they would lay their sick in the market place and beg him to let them touch just the tassel of his cloak. And all who touched him were healed.

And the Pharisees gathered about him with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem. They had noticed that some of his disciples ate their food with 'common' (that is, unwashed) hands. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they have washed their hands to the wrist, observing the tradition of the elders; and when they come in from the street they will not eat until they are sprinkled; and there are many other things which tradition requires them to observe, such as the sprinkling of cups and jugs and basins and beds.) Then the Pharisees and the scribes put the question to him, 'Why do your disciples not follow the traditions of the elders, but take their food with "common" hands?' But he said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied finely about you hypocrites, as it is written,

*This people honours me with their lips,*
*but their heart is far from me:*
*vain is their worship of me,*
*for the doctrines they teach are only human precepts.*

You neglect the commandment of God and observe the traditions of men,—the sprinkling of jugs and cups and other such like things you perform.' And he said, 'Do you well to set aside the commandment of God in order that you may keep your traditions? For Moses said, "Honour your father and your mother," and, "He who curses his father or mother shall be put to death." But you say that if a man tells his father or mother, "This property of mine which might be useful to you is *korban*" (that is, dedicated to God), you exempt him from doing anything more for his father or

mother,—revoking the word of God in the interest of the traditions which you keep. And many such like customs you practice.' And he called again the crowd to him and said to them, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand this: Nothing that goes into a man from outside him can defile him, but it is what comes out of a man that defiles a man.' And when he went into a house away from the crowd his disciples asked him the meaning of this 'parable' And he said to them, 'So even you do not understand? Do you not perceive that nothing outside a man can defile him by entering, since it does not go into his heart but into the belly and passes out through the bowels which cleanse all food? But,' said he, 'what comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil designs, sexual vice, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envyings, slanders, arrogance, folly,—all these evils come from within and they defile a man.'

Leaving there he went away into the region of Tyre and Sidon, and he entered a house and wished no man to know of it, but he could not escape notice. For a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came in and fell at his feet. She was a pagan woman, a Syrophoenician by race. And she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, 'Let the children first be fed, for it is not nice to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.' She replied to him 'Yes, Sir, but the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' And he said to her, 'Because of this answer you can go. The demon has left your daughter.' So she went home and found the child lying on a bed and the demon gone.

And he left the neighbourhood of Tyre and passed through Sidon to the sea of Galilee, crossing the territory of Decapolis. And they brought to him a deaf man who stammered, and they begged him to lay his hands upon him. And taking him off by himself away from the crowd, he put his fingers in the man's ears and touched his tongue with saliva, and looking up to heaven he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha' (which means, 'Open'). Then his ears were at once opened and his tongue was freed, and he talked correctly. And Jesus forbade them to tell any one about it. But the more he forbade them,

the more eagerly they proclaimed it. And they were utterly amazed and said, 'How well he has done everything! He even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

Mk $8^{27-33}$. Then Jesus and his disciples went away to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he inquired of his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' They replied to him, 'That you are John the Baptist, though some say Elijah, and others say that you are one of the prophets.' And he inquired of them, 'But you, who do you say that I am?' Peter replied to him, 'You are the Christ.' He commanded them not to say this about him to any one. Then he explained to them for the first time that the Son of Man must endure much suffering, and be rejected by the elders and the high priests and the scribes, and be killed, and rise again three days after. He said this thing openly. And Peter took him aside and began to reprove him for it. But he turned on him and, noticing his disciples, reproved Peter, telling him, 'Get out of my sight, Satan! For your way of thinking is not God's but man's.'

Mk $9^{30}$. And they left there and passed through Galilee, and he did not wish any man to know it. (*And thence to Jerusalem.*)

# *PART III*

## TO JERUSALEM

Mk $9^{30}$—$16^{8}$

### Section 8. ¶¶ 60–71

### THE JOURNEY

Mk $9^{30}$—$11^{11}$

Introductory

I have divided the Gospel of St. Mark into three main Parts, preceded by an Introduction. I do not pretend that the Evangelist conceived of these divisions so sharply as they are here distinguished. Nevertheless they are clearly enough marked by the departure from Galilee and the start for Jerusalem, and we have seen that the Galilean Period and the Period of Wandering are plainly distinguished by the character of Jesus' behaviour and discourse. The first had a single theme from the beginning to the end: the proclamation to the multitude of the approaching Reign of God. The second led up to the disclosure of Jesus' Messiahship to the intimate disciples. That was accompanied by an intimation of the Messiah's tragic end, which the Apostles could not accept. The Third Part leads us steadily to the rejection and death of the Messiah—up to the Resurrection, which was the disclosure of his secret to the world.

I have not been so presumptuous as some critics, who have believed that they could discriminate several distinctive periods in the Galilean Period, but I cannot rest content with the common division of Jesus' story into two periods only. That would be natural enough if one were following St. Luke, who entirely ignores the significance of Jesus' departure into heathen territory. But we have seen

that this is the most critical period of Jesus' story, and that we must seek there for the solution of the hardest problems which confront us in this strange history. I am not so bold as to think that we have solved or can solve the problem of Jesus, but such solutions as we have discovered in Part II will be tested in Part III, and they must seem more worthy of acceptance when they have survived that test. It is my conviction that they not only survive it, but avail to clarify the problems which have commonly tormented us in the last half of the Gospel.

At this point I congratulate myself that the tribulations of the Interpreter are ended. We shall not again be obliged to make conjectures which must seem hazardous until they are confirmed, or resort to expedients which must seem rash until they are laboriously justified. Henceforth we need not meddle with the order of St. Mark's text. From the moment that Jesus starts for Jerusalem St. Mark's story is so clear and consecutive that the other Synoptists, who deal so freely with the first part, have hardly ventured to alter it, even by interesting interpolations. It makes the impression now of being not only historical in the strictest sense, but chronologically consecutive. It is my opinion that we ought to trust this impression more than we commonly do, and the following interpretation reveals how important are the obscure connections between consecutive discourses of Jesus. In this part of his story St. Mark obviously makes no effort to arrange Jesus' sayings in a topical way. They all spring from some immediate suggestion at a particular time and place, and for this reason they are immensely more significant than scattered sayings which we cannot locate. Without the framework of this story, which ultimately we owe to St. Mark, we should have merely a collection of Jesus' sayings, and about the individual apophthegms contained in such a collection one might reasonably enough inquire whether some wise man had not said the same thing before Jesus. It would not seem reasonable to institute such an inquiry when we have in mind the sayings of Jesus which are intimately connected with his story. They are seen then to be original because *he* uttered them, with an intent and an effect which have

no comparison. It is amazing how uninteresting all of our Lord's sayings can be made when they are arranged systematically, as ethical data in support of a preconceived theory of morals and called 'The Teaching of Jesus.'

We do not have to prove the propriety of dividing the Gospel in the middle, precisely at the point where Jesus starts for Jerusalem, for all agree upon that division, in spite of the fact that it divides the time which we can posit for Jesus' public life very unequally. The traditional division into verses affords a sufficiently exact unit of measurement. The portion of St. Mark's Gospel which deals with Jesus' activity in Galilee, which occupied perhaps two months, contains 192 verses. The period of wandering, which occupied probably the greater part of the year, is disposed of in 143 verses. And now we have 314 verses to describe what happened in a period of two weeks.

At the end of his Gospel, St. Mark, who has hitherto been so indifferent to time, begins to count it by days. We know that it was on the first day of the week Jesus rose from the dead; that his body lay in the tomb during the whole of the Sabbath, which included the night which we would reckon as a part of Friday. *That* Friday was the day of Jesus' trial and crucifixion. The night preceding it he had celebrated the Last Supper in the upper room at Jerusalem, had prayed in the garden of Gethsemane and been brought before the improvised court of the high priest. About Thursday, 'the first day of unleavened bread' ($14^{12}$), nothing is related except Jesus' strange directions to his disciples how to make ready for him to eat the Passover. But the day before (Wednesday) was full of activity. The Evangelist represents that all of the discourses of Jesus at Jerusalem were uttered on that day, either to the people in the Temple, or to his disciples on the Mount of Olives, and that he dined at night in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. It was on Tuesday he cleansed the Temple. On Monday he had contrived his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and then retired for the night to Bethany. It is likely that he had come that day from Jericho. It was on a Sunday evening, therefore, he arrived in Jericho—a week before the Resurrection. The

Evangelist gives no hint that Jesus was more than five days in Jerusalem before his death, nor do the incidents recorded in the Gospel require a longer period. From Jericho we can reckon back to the departure from the villages of Caesarea Philippi. That indication of place is vague. It may indicate a distance of only one day's journey from Capernaum. Supposing that Peter's confession was on a Sunday, the start was made on Monday, and at latest it was Tuesday night when Jesus arrived at Capernaum. From the border of Galilee he was evidently accompanied by a large number of pilgrims, and that gives us assurance that he did not tarry by the way. Three days (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) were enough for the march through Galilee and the Peraea, until he crossed the Jordan again to get to Jericho. The Peraea was Jewish territory, and there Jesus was again surrounded by a multitude and began again to teach them. Somewhere not far from Jericho he must have rested for the Sabbath. All that is related in chapter $10^{1-45}$ must have occurred soon after he had crossed the border of Judaea (Peraea), and presumably not on the Sabbath, because they were incidents of the march. I cannot think that four days is too little for the march from Capernaum to Jericho, for I have tramped as far in one day. But this reckoning brings the confession of Peter within fourteen days of Easter, and the account of five days at Jerusalem occupies 233 verses, which is one-third of the entire Gospel.

We can find no fault with the emphasis St. Mark places upon these last days. Matthew and Luke preserve this emphasis, although they report many more of the sayings which Jesus uttered in Galilee ; and the Fourth Gospel, for reasons that are not clear to us, dwells almost exclusively upon Jesus' activity in Jerusalem. The majestic narrative of the last days is the most precious heritage of the Church. It gives us a clearer and more convincing picture of Jesus than all which is related in the first two-thirds of the Gospel. The picture we here form we can read back—and ought to —into the Galilean days. For from the very first Jesus went about with the weight of his great secret.

If we feel that we gain a real acquaintanceship with

Jesus from the report of his sayings and doings during these few days, we can understand how it was that his personal disciples on their first contact with him knew him well enough to be ready to follow him—without knowing who he was. Evidently we do not need to read a biography of Jesus before we can become his disciples. It seems to me that to make acquaintance with Jesus (if that is the sort of knowledge we are after) one single contact with him, through a word of his or a deed, serves us better than a biography, a ' Life.' Who ever became acquainted with a man by reading his biography ?

¶ 6o. The Start.

Mk $9^{30-32}$. **And they left that place and made their way through Galilee, and he did not wish anyone to know it, [31] for he was teaching his disciples, telling them that the Son of Man would be betrayed into the hands of men, and that they would kill him, and that when he was killed he would be raised again after three days. [32] But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him about it.**

In our arrangement of the Gospel text, Mk $9^{30}$ follows $8^{33}$. It may seem to count against this arrangement that it repeats the prediction of the Passion with an interval of only three verses between ($8^{31}$, $9^{31}$). But it seems to me that if the text had fallen into disarray, it must have been felt necessary to repeat the prediction of the Passion here, at the moment Jesus starts for Jerusalem ; for it is clearly the purpose of the Evangelist to represent that Jesus went there to be put to death. I must count this, therefore, not a second prediction of the Passion, but an editorial repetition of the first. Here it is added that the disciples ' did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him about it.' We have here an indication of the shyness they felt in Jesus' presence after they had learned what he was. But one reason for being ' afraid to ask him ' was perhaps their unwillingness to hear their worst suspicions confirmed. How unwilling they were to understand is suggested by Peter's behaviour after Jesus' prediction ($8^{33}$).

According to any arrangement of the text, ' that place ' was somewhere among the villages of Caesarea Philippi ($8^{27}$), perhaps not more than a day's tramp from Capernaum. It may be that, until the time had come when it was necessary to start for Jerusalem, Jesus had deferred putting to his disciples the grave question which was to lead to the disclosure of his Messiahship.

It was necessary to pass through Galilee in order to go up to Jerusalem, and it was natural that all should stop on their way at Capernaum, which was the home of many of them. There Jesus passed his last night in Peter's house. And doubtless no more than one night, for he was desirous of having no one know of his presence in Galilee. We behold him later followed by a very considerable company of pilgrims on his way to Jerusalem, but we are not informed whether he joined a caravan that was leaving Capernaum or overtook his company later, perhaps beyond the borders of Galilee. Fear of Herod is not the only conceivable reason for keeping hidden in Galilee. Jesus was evidently determined not to teach again or perform miracles till he had entered the territory of Judaea ($10^{1}$).

¶ 61. ' Which was the Greatest ? '

Mk $9^{33-37}$. **And they came to Capernaum, and when they were in the house he asked them, ' What were you arguing about on the way ? ' [34] But they were silent, for on the way they had been disputing with one another which was the greatest. [35] And he sat down and called the Twelve to him and said to them, ' If anyone wishes to be first, he must be the last of all and the servant of all.' [36] And he took a little child and placed him in the midst of them and putting his arms around him he said to them,**

> **[37] ' Whoever receives one of these little ones in my name receives me ; and whoever receives me, receives not me alone, but him who sent me.'**

This story gains significance when we recognize that it comes immediately after Peter's confession, whereby nine of the disciples learned for the first time that Jesus was the Christ. I suppose that on the day following this event

they tramped to Capernaum. They must have reached there after nightfall, if their presence in Peter's house was a secret, and they may have left before people were stirring in the morning.

No wonder they felt an unaccustomed shyness in Jesus' presence when they knew that he was the Christ. That is clearly enough implied by the fact that they did not discuss their personal interests in his hearing. This implies too that they kept aloof from him on the march. Or perhaps it would be more true to say that Jesus strode on ahead of them, absorbed in his own thoughts. This is the picture we get from Mark's brief but vivid description of the march through Judaea: 'They were on the way up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was marching in front of them, and the disciples were dismayed, and the people who followed were afraid' (10[32]). There was no company following them as they journeyed to Capernaum, but it appears that even then Jesus walked alone—far enough ahead of the disciples for them to suppose that he could not overhear their dispute.

When they were in the privacy of the house Jesus showed them that he was not so absorbed in his own thoughts as they supposed. This makes us suspect that he was left alone only because his disciples were afraid to approach him, and could not offer him the comfort of an understanding sympathy. Evidently not, for their argument along the way was about their own interests, which of them was the greatest. A certain jealousy was natural when Jesus had so clearly preferred the Three, taking them alone with him to the mountain, where they had learned the great secret which only the day before had been disclosed to the rest. But it was not about greatness in this present world the disciples were contending. They were thinking about the coming Kingdom and the places of honour they would obtain there as followers of the Christ (Mt 18[1]). Jesus had encouraged his disciples to think of their greatness in the coming Kingdom. When he said of John the Baptist that he was the greatest of men, but the least in the Kingdom of heaven would be greater than he, it was not to disparage John (for he, too, would be great in the Kingdom), but to give an exalted idea of the new order. With this, however,

he did not suggest invidious comparisons, but how natural that this thought should absorb the disciples the day after they had learned that Jesus was the Christ. The Christ and the Kingdom were correlative terms. We learn later how concrete their expectations were. They imagined nothing less than crowns and thrones (10[37]; *cp.* Mt 19[28]), and Jesus did not succeed in diverting them from such thoughts. That sufficiently explains why they were such poor companions for him. It explains, too, why they were unwilling to understand his sombre prognostications. Suffering they could endure in view of such a reward—but not the death of the Christ. That seemed absolutely incompatible with their ambitions.

The disciples were ashamed to tell what they had been arguing about. But Jesus knew. It is not improbable that he had overheard their loud dispute. To give them a solemn lesson, 'he sat down'—that is to say, with a certain ostentation of authority he assumed the attitude of the teacher—and though the disciples were all with him in the little house, he formally summoned them to hear his doctrine. All this to emphasize his brief but pointed sermon: 'If anyone wishes to be first, he must be the last of all and the servant of all.' 'First' and 'last' in the parable of the labourers (Mt 20[1–16]) have a different point. The reference there is to the last comer, whereas here 'the last' is clearly interpreted as the least, 'the servant of all.'

This solemn admonition was in vain, as we see subsequently. And so also was the parable of the child. The child is a many-sided parable, and as it is a recurrent theme in this section (9[42], 10[13–16, 24]), Jesus finds occasion to illuminate it on more than one side. All the more amazing then that he does not dwell upon the one side which interests our sentimental age—the child as an example of innocence. Without being able to employ the methods of psychoanalysis, he seems to have known that they were not innocent. He did not know Blake's *Cradle Song*:

> O the cunning wiles that creep
> In thy little heart asleep!
> When thy little heart doth wake,
> Then the dreadful light shall break.

Yet I feel sure that he would rebuke with 'the sword of his mouth' the sweet reasonableness of the P.E. Church, which has recently eliminated from its Baptismal Office the statement that children are 'conceived and born in sin.' That was a great triumph of Liberalism, but hardly of reasonableness; for in behalf of innocent children we ought to resent the practice of washing them in baptism when they have no sin to be cleansed of. The child is a favourite theme of Liberalism—and not of modern Liberalism only. It has for a long time been a favourite theme of Christian art, and many would be surprised to learn that (apart from pictures of the divine Child) it emerged for the first time at the Reformation. Then it became popular in both branches of the Church, the Catholic and the Protestant, because it was an outcome of Humanism. A later Humanist, Jean Jacques Rousseau (who deposited his own children one by one at the door of a foundling home), first taught us thoroughly to admire children for their innocence. It is a favourite dictum of Liberalism that Jesus *discovered* 'the inestimable value of the human soul,' and this is supposed to be proved by his treatment of children, especially by his ominous warning ($9^{42}$), 'Whoever causes one of these little ones to fall . . . it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung about his neck and be thrown into the lake.' This dictum is insecurely proved, it seems to me. For nowadays it is not self-evident that the soul of a human child is *inestimably* more valuable than (a Darwinian might say) the soul of a young anthropoid ape. Let us say instead, the soul of a bird or of a rose. And it seems to me reasonable to affirm that Jesus, instead of *discovering* the inestimable value of a human soul, himself *bestowed* upon it a new value such as no soul of any animal species inherently possesses. Instead of regarding the child as a being so perfect that it had no need of salvation, he educes it as an example of helplessness, a clear case of a soul that is unable to save itself.

In this instance, at all events, it is plain that Jesus is not exalting the child. As an object lesson, an example of the 'last of all,' the least considered among his followers, he takes a little child—one of Peter's brats, we may suppose.

We are not told whether it was a boy or a girl, and I use the pronoun ' he ' only because I do not like to say ' it.' Jesus does not leave the little object lesson alone and embarrassed in the midst of these men, but he puts his arm around him. Thereby he claims the child as his follower—one who cannot literally follow him now, but is to follow him ultimately into the Kingdom of God. The consideration that *even* a child may be an heir of the Kingdom of God bestows upon him a value which he would not otherwise possess. This little *heir* (' believer ' is the word used in verse 42) is therefore venerable in spite of his youth. But Jesus does not say (as the argument might suggest) that this last and least of disciples would be first and foremost in the Kingdom of God. That would be a fallacious hope to hold out to the child, who was likely to become some day a mere man. Here and in verse 42 Jesus dwells only upon the apparent insignificance of the child. The insignificance is only apparent if the child is claimed by *him*. ' Whoever receives one of these little ones in my name receives me.' It is because they are his, because they are ' believers ' ($9^{42}$), that they have such value and significance. ' In my name ' is explained in verse 41 to mean ' in the name that you are Christ's,' that is, with the recognition that you are adherents of the Messiah. But we must suppose that the outsiders who were presuming to cast out demons ' in thy name ' (verse 38) were using the name *Jesus*, as did the ' strolling Jewish exorcists ' about whom we are told in Acts $19^{13}$. There can be no doubt that the Evangelist attached to the phrase ' in my name ' the religious significance which it had for the Church (Phil. $2^{9\ 10}$); and we must confess that the passage in which Jesus uses it is profoundly religious, almost mystical. ' Receives me ! ' More than that ! ' Whoever receives me, receives not me alone but him who sent me ! ' That sounds like the Fourth Gospel ! But if Jesus had never uttered a word like this, how could St. John have ventured to attribute so many such sayings to him ?

This saying is not eschatological. It assumes that after Jesus' death and Resurrection people will still continue marrying and giving in marriage, for the procreation of little

images of God, so easily defaced, so sorely in need of protection against temptations that assail them within and without; that there will be little ' believers ' to be defended and big believers to defend them—for a period of time to which he does not venture to set precise limits ($13^{32}$). But Jesus was not *only* an eschatologist. It is not a ' thoroughgoing eschatology ' but a *narrow* sort which would ignore every other trait in Jesus' story. He did not prophesy that after three days, when he was to rise again, all his disciples would rise with him and the ' regeneration ' of heaven and earth would be accomplished. He therefore contemplated an ' interim ' in which men were bound to live ' as seeing the things which are invisible,' as ' believers ' in a new heaven and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. But this is the same as to say that Jesus contemplated the Church. I confess that for my part I know no reason for denying that he might even have used that name—' my Ecclesia ' (Mt $16^{18}$). Mgr. Batiffol affirms, with a candid distinction which is unusual, that ' Christ promised the Kingdom, what came was the Church.' But I cannot think that the Church is an adequate surrogate for the Kingdom of God. I can regard it only as a sacramental pledge that the Kingdom Christ promised will ultimately come. A decisive orientation towards the future, towards man's impossible possibility, the triumph of God's Reign, was the sort of eschatology which Jesus impressed upon his disciples. There is still time left for us to live eschatologically.

¶ 62. ' In my Name.'

Mk $9^{38-50}$. **John said to him, ' Teacher, we saw one who in your name was casting out demons but does not follow us, and we stopped him.' [39] But Jesus said, ' Do not stop him, for no one who does a miracle in my name will be able quickly to abuse me. [40] For who is not against us is for us. [41] For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in the name that you belong to Christ, *Amen* I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. [42] And whoever causes the fall of one of these little ones who are believers, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung about his neck and be thrown into the lake. [43] And if your hand makes you fall, cut it off. It**

**is better to be maimed and enter into Life, than to have both your hands and go into Gehenna, to the fire that is never quenched. [45] And if your foot makes you fall, cut it off. It is better to enter into Life a cripple, than to have your two feet and be thrown into Gehenna. [47] And if your eye makes you fall, tear it out. It is better with one eye to enter into the Kingdom of God, than to have two eyes and be thrown into Gehenna, [48] where their worm never dies and the fire is never put out. [49] For everyone must be salted by fire. [50] A good thing is salt ; but if salt is tasteless, how are you to restore its flavour ? Have salt within you, and live at peace one with another.'**

Some light has been thrown upon this passage in advance, because two themes recur here which first emerged in the last paragraph. It seems as if Jesus' use of the phrase, ' in my name,' suggested to John a case which had lately come to his attention. It is the only instance in the Synoptic Gospels where John is represented as the sole speaker. A little later he seconded the motion of his brother James that they two should have the chief seats in the Kingdom. He shows his jealousy now with regard to a man who ' does not follow *us*,' yet presumes to use Jesus' name to drive out evil spirits. It seems that after Jesus' departure from Galilee a man who had been impressed by his success as a healer turned exorcist and adjured the demons in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth to come out of their victims (or shall we call them ' hosts ' ?). It is implied that he had success until John stopped him. From one point of view (and everything depends on the point of view) this man was rendering homage to Jesus. And Jesus himself was by no means inclined to have him stopped. He might have said that the man was doing a good work and was actually fighting in the same cause, as an associate if not as an ally. So he doubtless thought. But the reason he actually gave is a less obvious one. It implies a deep humility. ' No one who does a miracle in my name will be able quickly to abuse me.' It seems so little to ask. But he asked no more of John the Baptist : ' Blessed is he who is not offended in me ' (Mt 11[6]). And now that he is looking forward to rejection

and abuse he can be thankful that there is one outsider who will not quickly be able to join the crowd of his maligners. Since Jesus did not tell the people who he was, he was reasonable enough not to exact of them an allegiance which only the knowledge of his secret could fully justify. He expresses his thought in a tolerant maxim: 'Who is not against us is for us.' (The 'us' is an echo of John's phrase.) I have no difficulty at all in believing that in another 'universe of discourse' Jesus uttered the intolerant maxim, 'He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters' (Mt $12^{30}$ = Lk $11^{23}$). And I conceive that both can be applied to the ecclesiastical conditions of to-day. We are bound at least to be tolerant of the men who are combating evil, though they do not follow *us*. But on the other hand we are encouraged to be intolerant of a man, though he be of our own sect, who casts out no demons, who is not sincerely engaged in Jesus' warfare (Mt $12^{29}$), and can only too quickly speak disparagingly of him.

The tolerant maxim at least was meant for common use, and Jesus himself applies it to a particular case. The particular case he mentions, being the most trivial sign of goodwill that can be thought of—merely 'a cup of water to drink'—shows that the application is exceedingly broad. An outsider (one who 'does not follow *us*') may be sure of his reward, if he does only such an act of kindness to one of Christ's little ones, his humble disciples. What sort of reward? Obviously an eternal reward, for that is the only sort of reward Jesus thought worth mentioning, except once ($10^{30}$) when he spoke ironically. But a heavenly reward is utterly disproportionate to such a service! Certainly, but so are all of God's rewards. Because such an act is done to a disciple 'in the name that he is Christ's' (because he is a Christian, we would say), Jesus accepts it as homage rendered to him. Because this is incredible Jesus confirms the saying with his solemn *Amen*. And, after all, is not Jesus free to dispose of his favours? Has he not a right to do what he will with his own? This saying is in fact no more incredible than one he had just uttered. It is only another way of saying, 'Whoever receives one of these little ones in

my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me alone but him who sent me.' That shows how heavenly and how disproportionate is the reward he promises. One who touches only the hem of his garment is saved. I regard this as one of Jesus' many answers to the questions (Lk $13^{23}$), ' Are there few that be saved ? ' Our mystical-religious point of view does not permit us to give a cheerful answer to that question. For though man is a religious animal, all mystically minded persons agree that conspicuous virtuosity in this field, or even any solid achievement, is rare, and is conditioned upon a favourable psychic disposition. The notion of the divine election might be broader than that ! And, in fact, Jesus' eschatology was more liberal than our religious psychology. It was a cosmical vision which encouraged a broad view. It included all past generations of humanity, and men might be seen coming to the Kingdom of heaven ' from the east and from the west ' (Mt $8^{11}$). It seemed to have no limit but the compassion of God. And Jesus' favourite picture of the Day of Judgment, though it is too eschatological for us, may be seen to have certain advantages. It permitted Jesus to represent the King (the Son of Man) dealing out with sovereign bounty disproportionate and eternal rewards (Mt $25^{31-46}$).

But there is another side of the picture, which Jesus did not shrink from depicting (though it is too eschatological for us). He is thinking still of the helpless little children—so liable to fall. But not of them only. He includes now under the word ' little ones ' all of his helpless disciples. Even the Apostles ! A few days later he addressed them as ' children ' when he reflected ' how hard it is to enter into the Kingdom of God ' ($10^{24}$), and it was as children he thought of them in the midst of his own agony in the Garden, fearing that these helpless ones might be involved in the temptation that impended over him—and might not be able to endure it. He speaks of them here as little ones who are ' believers.' The word seems to be used absolutely, as it was afterwards in the Church (Acts of the Apostles) before the word Christian was in common use. I have explained already why I am not dismayed at that. I feel no embarrassment in recognizing that all the strange precepts which

follow were addressed to the Church and applicable to an indefinite interval *after* the Resurrection of Jesus. The only alternative is that they were never uttered at all. For it would be absurd to apply them only to the brief interim of thirteen days *before* the Resurrection. Children only too easily stumble and fall. But that they must ultimately lose their reward is not what Jesus is thinking of here. God is able to set them on their feet again and make them stand. Jesus is thinking with indignation of the man who causes them to fall. Who is that monster? That is *me*. He is the very opposite of the man who 'receives' one of these little ones. And yet he may be the same man! His 'reward' (eschatologically viewed) is here only implied. But the enormity of it is clearly enough implied when we are told that it would be 'better' for him to have a great millstone hung about his neck and be thrown into the lake. It is an extravagant expression. Such a millstone could be turned only by an ox. A small hand-mill would be enough to carry that monster (*me*) to the bottom of the lake.

St. Paul did not think it absurd to suppose that a man who had saved others might himself become a castaway. St. James observed that preachers were peculiarly in danger of offending—'with the tongue.' And when St. Chrysostom wondered if any bishop could be saved he was thinking not merely of the danger of spiritual pride, but of the danger which attached to the only rank of the ministry which was expected to preach.

But Jesus clearly recognized, as we have seen, that it is not chiefly the things that come from outside a man that defile him and cause him to fall, and now he goes on to consider the temptations which come from within. With this case he deals not less trenchantly—not less indignantly, we might say. At all events, the fate he allots to men who make *themselves* to fall is not indicated indirectly but described explicitly and in terms too graphic for our taste. 'If your hand makes you fall . . . if your foot . . . if your eye . . . it is better to enter into Life a cripple than to have hands and feet and eyes and be thrown into Gehenna, where their worm never dies and the fire is never quenched.' These are picturesque and popular terms—therefore the

more effective. The worm and the fire are furnished by the last verse of Isaiah. Gehenna, the name of a dismal ravine skirting Jerusalem, where every sort of rubbish was thrown, had long been used to describe hell. But picturesque detail is not essential to eschatology. In this passage, Life is used as the equivalent of the Kingdom of God, and to the wise this warning would be no less impressive, if, instead of Gehenna and the worm and the fire, *Death* simply were spoken of as the wages of sin.

This is clearly the most thoroughgoing eschatology. We are brought back again to interim ethics. But not now to heroic ethics. The danger is seen to be too terrible to be faced with courage. We are again on the brink. But what a brink is this ! On the one hand Life threatens to absorb us (that might prompt courage !)—but on the other hand Death threatens us—Gehenna, the undying worm, the unquenchable fire ! Here our only wisdom is fear and resolute withdrawal from danger. ' Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation ' was Jesus' admonition to the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. This path with a perilous brink on either edge of it is like Zarathustra's ' Bridge of the Separator.'

Precisely in a line with these admonitions is the word which Jesus uttered about eunuchs (Mt $19^{12}$), and read in this connection we can hardly say that it is more extravagant. These are all of them the extremest examples of self-mutilation. And Jesus was too deep a psychologist to ignore the devastating danger of man's *libido*.

These admonitions have been prized (or else rejected) because they are supposed to sanction asceticism. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have seen that Jesus neither led an ascetic life himself nor enjoined upon his disciples even such an elementary practice as fasting. And here we are far from the heroic asceticism of the Syrian hermits, who pitted their strength against the devil. Jesus' counsel here is to flee from danger. The spirit may be willing, ' but the flesh is weak.' Here there is no room for the pride which is fostered by doing ' works of perfection,' but only the humiliation of recognizing ' the law of sin in my members,' and the difficulty of deliverance ' from the

body of this death' (Rom. $7^{23, 24}$). There is no room here for merit, when all that we do is done only to escape a most dreadful doom.

In ancient times, we can imagine, such sayings may have stricken men with terror, but we in our day cannot help finding them comical. For Professor Lodge has justly remarked that 'the modern man does not waste time thinking about his sins.' We have to confess that the greater part of Jesus' Gospel is antiquated. We may be grateful to the Liberals for salvaging what they can.

I wish I understood all that Jesus meant by 'salt' in the last two verses ($9^{49, 50}$). I perceive that the 'fire' he *here* speaks of is not hell fire but a purgatorial fire, which every man has to endure, and from which he *may* come out purified (1 Cor. $3^{13, 15}$). I can well believe that '*every man must*' go through such fire—but what is meant by 'salted with fire' I do not know, unless a 'Western' gloss on this passage ('and every sacrifice must be salted with salt') rightly refers us to Lev. $2^{13}$ for our explanation. If in the sacrificial ceremony salt was a symbol of a covenant relation with God, it may be taken in the last verse as a symbol of covenant relation between man and man, and so Professor Moffatt would be justified in translating, 'Let there be "salt between you," and live at peace with one another.' I *like* Professor Menzies' interpretation, 'There is fire to be encountered afterwards if not now; how much better to face it now and by self-sacrifice insure against the future'; but I am not sure that this is what was meant. At any rate, it teaches me nothing about salt; and I am inclined to dwell upon the one thought I can readily understand, that salt is a preservative against decay. In that sense I interpret a word which Jesus addressed to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth' (Mt $5^{13}$), and it seems to me to belong in this connection. But it remains just as obscure to me how salt can lose its savour as how, if it were possible to lose it, the savour might be again restored.

¶ 63. MARRIAGE.

Mk $10^{1-12}$. **And departing from there he went to the region of Judaea and along the other side of the Jordan,**

**and crowds gathered about him again, and again he taught them as he was accustomed to do.**

**[2] And some of the Pharisees came up and proposed to him a test question, whether it was allowable for a man to dismiss his wife. [3] But his reply to them was 'What did Moses command you?' [4] And they said, 'Moses gave permission to write a bill of separation and dismiss.' [5] But Jesus said to them, 'It was on account of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you that commandment; [6] but in the Book of Genesis [he wrote,]**

***Male and female God created them.***
***[7] Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother***
***and shall cleave unto his wife,***
***[8] and the two shall be one flesh.***

**So they are no longer two, but one flesh. [9] Therefore what God has united man must not separate. [10] And in the house the disciples again asked him about this. [11] And he said to them, 'Whoever dismisses his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; [12] and if a woman releases her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'**

Though no questions of literary criticism any more arise to perplex us, there are three problems of *textual* criticism in this tenth chapter. There are no other cases in the whole Gospel which sorely tempt me to desert the text I am pledged to, in favour of an easier or a more acceptable reading. Two of these cases occur in the paragraph we are now about to study, one at the beginning and the other at the end of it. We have almost authority enough for omitting from the first verse the words 'and through the,' and that would leave the clear and simple statement that Jesus 'went into the region of Judaea across the Jordan.' However, the text which is best supported yields a clear enough meaning to one who uses due diligence in interpreting it. The Evangelist thinks of Judaea proper as the destination of the journey, and therefore the other side of the Jordan (the Peraea), though it was politically Jewish territory, is mentioned merely to indicate the route which was travelled.

One who knew only the physical geography of Palestine would not be able to surmise that pilgrims going up to Jerusalem from Galilee would cross the Jordan twice rather than follow it continuously on the west side. That circuitous route was prescribed by the fact that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. The direct way from Galilee to Jerusalem was barred by Samaria. In Greek the word *peran* can be used only as a preposition, meaning across ; but Wellhausen remarks that in the Semitic idiom it could be used also as a substantive, so that one might say (as our text does) ' through the across of the Jordan.' And, in fact, Peraea (= *peran*) was used as the proper name for the east side of Jordan opposite Samaria and the northern part of Judaea. The meaning, then, is that Jesus went to central Judaea and to get there followed the route through the Peraea. We are not told at what point he first crossed the Jordan. We are free to suppose that he followed the west bank until he came to the border of Samaria, and that leaves room for St. Luke's story of the cure of ten lepers (Lk $17^{11}$) ' between Samaria and Galilee.' Presumably it was opposite Jericho that he recrossed the river.

In any case, Jesus had not far to march through Galilee before he crossed the Jordan into Jewish territory. *Then*, we are told, ' crowds gathered about him again, and again he taught them as he had been accustomed to do.' ' It is assumed here,' says Wellhausen, ' that in a foregoing period Jesus had kept himself aloof from the crowd.' That statement sounds flat to us who have learned how long Jesus had been wandering in heathen territory. Nevertheless, we may take it as a confirmation of the result we have reached, and it is important to note that Jesus ceased to travel incognito the moment he entered Jewish territory. Several days of travel and one day of Sabbath rest still remained before reaching Jerusalem, and Jesus had ample occasion for teaching the band of pilgrims that accompanied him. St. Luke cleverly interjects at this point (Lk $17^{30}$–$18^{15}$) some of the teachings by which he supplements St. Mark's narrative, and many of the sayings which he has put a little earlier in his story would be just as appropriate here as in Galilee. For the discourse about marriage and divorce (the first

which Mark recounts after the crossing of the Jordan) bears not the slightest trace of eschatology.

Not only did the usual crowd surround Jesus, but the usual Pharisees ' came up.' And why not ? They were the pious people most likely to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the expression ' came up ' indicates that they did not steadily accompany Jesus and his friends. Also they were the people most interested in scholastic questions, and it was a scholastic question which was now propounded to Jesus. The statement that the question was asked by way of ' putting him to the test ' means no more than that. There was no concrete case of divorce brought to Jesus for his judgment. If there had been, his judgment might have been as shockingly lenient as that which he addressed to the woman caught in the act of adultery (Jn $8^{11}$).

Except for this question of the Pharisees we should not know that the Jews were ever disquieted about the adequacy of their divorce law. We can easily imagine, however, that their contact with Greek and Roman civilization might have suggested to them that their own law was too primitive. In fact, there were few barbarians or savages which could not boast of more equitable customs. For the Jewish law, founded upon Deut. $24^{1}$, left everything to the arbitrary decision of the husband. He might send his wife away, without providing any indemnity, without seeking the sanction of a civil arbitrament, and without alleging any cause except that she did ' not find favour in his eyes.' He had only to hand her his written statement that he renounced all claim upon her as his possession. That left her free to marry another ; and if without marriage she cohabited with a man, she could not be charged with the capital crime of adultery. Jesus rightly regarded this as a proof of their ' hardness of heart.' It goes without saying that to the woman there was accorded no right to dismiss her husband. That is what troubles us when we come to the last verse of this paragraph : ' if a woman dismisses her husband.' To soften that expression I have used in my translation the word ' releases.' That is, in fact, the primary meaning of *apoleuein*, but it does not help us much, and I cannot believe that Mark, who was a Jew, could report this hypothetical

statement without recognizing that it was absurd. If the reading in D and Syra S. is an emendation, it is at least a reasonable one: 'and if a wife who has gone away from her husband marries another.'

St. Matthew's text, with the inserted clauses, 'for any cause' and 'except for fornication,' implies that the question was a narrower one, that scholars were disturbed only by the suspicion that the current practice was perhaps looser than even Moses' broad 'permission' contemplated. 'For any cause' means, of course, for every cause that might conceivably be alleged, which is equivalent to saying, for no cause at all. But Moses expressly mentions but one cause; 'because he has found some matter of nakedness in her.' That would mean especially, if not exclusively, unchastity; and it must be understood of unchastity before marriage, because unchastity after marriage was adultery, and that was punishable with death by stoning (Jn $8^{3}$). No need then for divorce! St. Matthew, therefore, when he mentions 'fornication' as a ground for divorce allowed by Jesus, clearly does not mean adultery, but unchastity before marriage. This, however, is an attempt to mitigate the absoluteness of Jesus' assertion of the indissolubility of marriage.

The Pharisees had come with their vain scholastic question about divorce, and Jesus replied to them with a profound word about marriage. It was often so: they asked for a stone, and he gave them bread.

In answer to their question Jesus referred them back to Moses. 'What did Moses command you'? They replied, making a just distinction, that Moses did not indeed command but *permitted* a husband to send his wife away, with no further formality than writing a bill of separation. That, said Jesus, was a permissive law required by the hardness of your hearts. But he himself knew a more adequate answer to his own question, 'What did Moses command you?' He finds it 'at the beginning' of Moses' First Book, in the ideal marriage which is implied in the story of creation. Wellhausen's suggestion is convincing as well as attractive, that *apo arches ktiseos* is an attempt to render into Greek the Hebrew *baroshith*, the first word of Genesis, which

supplies the name for the book. This is not unlike Jesus' way of indicating the source of another quotation from Moses, ' at the bush ' (12[26] referring to Ex. 3[6]). It is left to us to supply the words ' he wrote.' However, nothing much hangs upon this interpretation, except that it co-ordinates the two quotations which follow. The first is from Gen. 1[27]—' Male and female God created them.' The second (from Gen. 2[24]) hangs upon that. The ' therefore,' which in the original connection refers to the mythical account of woman's formation from a rib of man, is now referred to a less disputable fact : ' Male and female he created them.' We might raise the question whether such a statement is not too trivial to bear the weight of the inference which is here hung upon it. To be sure, it does not have to bear the *whole* weight, for Moses was the author of both sayings. But Jesus was fully justified in his perception that a high ideal of monogamistic marriage underlies the story of the creation of man, both in the Elohist and in the Jahvist tradition. It is from the Jahvist tradition (Gen 2[24]) Jesus takes his second quotation : ' Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they *two* shall be one flesh.'

' One flesh ' is the conclusion of the whole argument. ' In Hebrew the word flesh (like the word blood) indicates simply relationship, and the meaning of Gen. 2[24] is this : though a man and wife are of different bloods, they yet become one blood through marriage, and this relationship is so strong that it looses the ties of natural relationship (father and mother).' So says Wellhausen—and he adds that it is not possible to produce a conclusive proof that Jesus did not understand this. I should think not ! From the use he here makes of that passage it might seem rather that he was the first man since Moses who really understood it. We might be tempted to think that his interpretation was too profound, if Wellhausen had not come forward to support him. Jesus' interpretation of Scripture was always profound, but we have not yet encountered an instance where it was not just. His boldest interpretation was of the passage which he designates as ' at the bush ' (Ex. 3[6] ; Mk 12[26]). There he discovered an implication of the

resurrection of the dead! We have yet to see whether he was justified in that.

From the words of Moses Jesus concludes, 'So they are no longer *two* but one flesh.' I suspect that by this he means more than Moses meant. And certainly the practical consequences he draws from it leaves no room for Moses' concession: 'Therefore what God has united no man must separate'—least of all, the two parties to the contract, husband and wife.

St. Paul shows his familiarity with this saying of the Lord (1 Cor. $7^{10}$): 'To married people the instruction I give is this (only it is not I that give it but the Lord), that a wife is not to separate from her husband; but if she does separate, she is to remain single, or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not put away his wife.'

We are surprised to find that at the end of this day Jesus and his disciples were assembled 'in the house.' That may mean no more than *indoors*, but it reminds us of Galilee and the familiar house of Simon Peter. We wonder that on the march to Jerusalem Jesus and his twelve disciples could find a house where they could all be entertained together—especially at a time when many pilgrims were travelling along the same route. We may reflect, however, that among all these pilgrims Jesus was a distinguished figure, the amazing prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. Even at Jerusalem, when it was most crowded, he managed in a mysterious way to get a man to give him for the Passover supper 'a large room upstairs, with couches spread, all ready.' And it was not only at Jerusalem he received an ovation from the crowd. There was a great crowd collected at Jericho to see him go by ($10^{46}$), and St. Luke's story ($19^{16}$) tells us how marvellously he managed to have Zacchaeus entertain him at supper—and perhaps give his party lodging for the night.

When they were alone in the house the disciples, as on former occasions, brought up the subject of that day's most surprising discourse. They were all married men, and Matthew ($19^{10}$) represents that they were upset by Jesus' view of marriage as an indissoluble bond, exclaiming that 'if such were the relation of a man with his wife, it would

be better not to marry.' And Jesus, it appears, agreed with them—except for ' those who have the gift.' He himself was an example. The disciples therefore wanted to hear more on this subject—and they heard more. He had said to the Pharisees that putting away one's wife was wrong. But that wrong—which he describes so well as ' hardness of heart '—was not in itself adultery. Adultery comes about when he marries another woman. Likewise the wife, though she has been put away against her will and through no fault of her own, becomes an adulteress when she marries another man.

This evangelical teaching is now commonly repudiated by Evangelicals—perhaps because it is the only sociological precept Jesus ever uttered, his only contribution to the ' social Gospel ' ?

The words which were uttered to the disciples indoors were no more esoteric than what he had said to the Pharisees. They apply to all men, and it was important for all men to know them. It was such teaching as this Jesus would have his disciples shout from the house-tops.

Here we have ethical norms which are absolute and universal—except that they do not apply to the Kingdom of God, where ' they neither marry nor are given in marriage.' There is no trace here of eschatology or of interim ethics. There is no brink visible. The prospect extends not only over the whole world but through indefinite tracts of time. As long as flesh and blood endures man and wife are ideally inseparable, for this ideal is founded upon a perception of the nature of man from his very creation. How can I say that without a smile, when I—like all modern men—am an evolutionist ? Well, at least I am not a Darwinian evolutionist, having lived for many years on the Continent of Europe, where that species is practically extinct. Remembering a word of Solovieff's, I can say without a smile of ridicule that Jesus here seems to contemplate (uneschatologically) generations of men and women who will unite in matrimony to produce ' new images of God '—and that he now sees them (if he did not foresee) defying more than one of his precepts and (with a supreme demonstration of hardness of heart) deserting their offspring, defacing the divine image,

and causing these little ones to stumble. That seems to us the worst of divorce, though Jesus might not agree with us.

Jesus plainly repudiated the law which was observed in Israel. Did he merely put another *law* in its place? I would reply, Yes and no. At any rate, this is part of the larger question, whether the Gospel is properly conceived of as the 'New Law.' Early Catholicism could play with this notion without much danger so long as the contrast between law and grace was vividly felt. For the Orthodox Churches it has become like a hide that binds them—from which even a Tolstoy could not escape. One thing is clear. If we treat this saying of Jesus as law in the strictest sense, we must interpret it with casuistry (as Matthew began to do), and in the end we must resort to the Rota or some such legal mechanism, to relieve those for whom 'this truth is not practicable' (Mt $19^{11}$, Moffatt's translation).

### ¶ 64. Children and the Kingdom.

Mk $10^{13-16}$. **And parents brought their children to him to have him touch them, but the disciples reproved the parents for bringing them. 14 Jesus, however, when he noticed this was angry and said to them reprovingly, 'Let the children come to me, do not stop them; for to such as these belongs the Kingdom of God. 15 *Amen* I say to you, Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.' 16 Then putting his arms around them he blessed them with the laying on of his hands.**

On other occasions we have been obliged to determine with much labour, and perhaps precariously, the time and place and circumstance of Jesus' sayings. Here we are told all this with as much precision as we could wish for. And these details are of the greatest importance for our understanding of what Jesus said and did. The next four paragraphs which we are about to study record incidents which occurred on the journey up to Jerusalem, after Jesus had crossed into that part of Judaea which lay beyond the Jordan (Mk $10^{1}$). But we have also the precise indication that what is related here ($10^{13-31}$) occurred at a definite time and place along the way, so that we have not merely a

correct historical sequence, but a swift succession—four incidents which are so closely related to one another that their significance is lost when we separate them. We are dealing now with a part of the Gospel of St. Mark where we can trust even so casual an indication, and we shall see in the sequel that our trust is justified. As a matter of fact, we are accustomed to divide the narrative sharply at verse 17, ignoring the indication, ' as he started again on his way,' and therefore it does not occur to us that the story of the rich young man might have anything to do with the children. So we miss the point of both stories.

We can estimate here how much we lose by the fact that many of the sayings of Jesus have been handed down to us without any indication of the circumstances to which they applied, or the special pathos with which they were uttered. No one of the impressing sayings included in this long passage would have been significant if torn from its setting. We may observe also that to get a just notion of Jesus we may have to combine indications which do not seem wholly consistent. From verse 32 we might easily get the impression that Jesus was a *grim* figure as he marched ahead of his disciples, and it is natural to suppose that during this journey he was completely absorbed by his reflections about the fate that awaited him at Jerusalem. We may imagine, too, that as a thoroughgoing eschatologist he could think of nothing but eschatology. But no, he is capable of stopping along the way to caress little children, he loves a rich young man, and he banters his disciples. So prompt was he to respond to every human need and interest that he replied to the Pharisees with a deep discourse about marriage. This great eschatologist ! Just as if the world were to go on for ever ! It is only by combining such contradictory traits that we can get a whole picture of Jesus.

Jesus was an eschatologist who could talk seriously about marriage, jest about the rewards of discipleship, and embrace little children ; but there is no doubt here that he is an eschatologist. Here less than ever. Even Wellhausen says (remarking on verses 14 and 15), ' The eschatological Kingdom of God comes now to the fore, *whereas in the first half of the Gospel there was hardly a hint of it.*' The clause

I have italicized sounds amazing to us after all we have seen and heard in the first half of the Gospel. But we can accept gratefully the admission Wellhausen makes in the first clause. He rightly remarks that the Kingdom is here regarded as a *gift*. One has merely to receive it as a child receives things. That is, in fact, the point of the story. And that must be eschatology because it is neither morality nor religion. And it is manifestly the same sort of eschatology which we found in the first half of the Gospel. Here, as during the days of Bethsaida, the crowds are drawn to Jesus by their expectation of the coming Kingdom. This is nowhere expressly declared, but it is everywhere evident. That is the reason why they brought the children to him to be 'touched'; that is the reason why the young man inquired so impetuously, 'What must I do to inherit Eternal Life?' It explains Jesus' disconsolate exclamation, 'How hard it is!' and the disciples' dismay, 'Who then can be saved?' It prompted their query, 'What shall we have therefore?' and the request of the sons of Zebedee that they might sit on thrones on either side of Jesus in his glory. We have here, as it happens, all the synonyms for the Kingdom of God, namely, Life, Salvation, and Glory. We can hardly overestimate the predominance of this interest, and it is impossible to understand the Gospel if we leave this out of account.

With all that is told us here not much imagination is required to depict the scene in full. We must suppose that Jesus had left the highway in order to rest for a while in some village square. There the children were brought to him. There on the edge of the crowd a young man overheard the incredibly comfortable words which Jesus addressed to the children—or to the disciples over their heads. And when Jesus started again on his march he ran after him impetuously, to learn how *he* could be saved. That arrested the march, and it was on that same spot Jesus continued to talk to his disciples about that young man, and later about their own absorbing interests.

If it was in a village he was resting, the children did not need to be brought from far. It is natural to suppose that the *parents* brought them, though the text has only the

vague expression, ' they brought.' If I were painting this picture, I would not exclude the fathers; for not in all races are male parents shamefaced at being seen to fondle their children, and in Palestine women might not be bold enough to press forward in the crowd. ' To have him touch them ' was their purpose in bringing their children. Why so solicitous to have Jesus *touch* the children? There is no hint that they were sick children. *We* know that it was with the hope of *saving* them, not from sickness, but from Death. Positively put, it was to insure their entrance into the Kingdom (Eternal Life). Children seemed to be at a disadvantage because they could not *do* anything to deserve the rewards of the Kingdom. Some of them were doubtless too young even to *believe*—though Jesus regarded them all as ' believers ' ($9^{42}$). The Kingdom was imminent, and something must be done on behalf of the children. It would be a great assurance if Jesus would merely touch them. If faith was lacking to the children, the parents had enough faith to supply their defect. And not too much of it—not what Jesus would regard as superstition. Had he not forgiven a man's sins on account of the faith of the people who brought him? And what more was it than a ' touch ' when he distributed bread to the crowd at Bethsaida?

Why, then, did the Apostles reprove the parents? Because this seemed to them an intrusion upon the Teacher, who held himself aloof even from *them*, and whom they, knowing who he was, hardly dared to address. But not for that reason alone. They felt also that this was taking too lightly the Kingdom of God. It was for violent men to take it by storm, and they were themselves going up to Jerusalem to suffer in order that they might enter into glory. This was no affair for children! The Apostles were angry—and Jesus became angry with them!

Jesus knew perfectly well why the children were brought to him—just as he knew why Nicodemus came to him (Jn $3^{1-3}$), or why anybody came to him. If they were not seeking salvation from disease, they were seeking salvation from Death—that is to say Eternal Life, the Kingdom of God, a share of the divine Glory. Extravagant hope! But

that is the only motive that can bring anyone now to Jesus. And he was the last to condemn it—even if it was a question of little children. He sided with the parents against the Apostles. ' Let the children come to me, do not stop them ; for to such as these belongs the Kingdom of God.' It really is *God's* Kingdom and not man's—not at all the Kingdom we are striving to bring about by our own wisdom and toil. Children need to be saved just as much as anybody else—and it is not any more difficult for God to save them.

It is our modern sentimentalism which prompts us to interpret more broadly the parable of the child. We stress the innocence of childhood—as if every child were just naturally fit to inherit the Glory of God. Jesus dwells only on the child's helplessness. The words which Matthew reports ($18^4$) about the necessity a man is under to ' humble himself like this child ' does not imply any absurdity. The *child* is not humble, but it is a profound humiliation for a man to have to put himself in the position of a dependent little creature and *receive* the Kingdom of God without being able to boast of any merit. Even innocence would not entitle us to a share in the Glory of God. That is the humiliation of all sacraments : they are simply *given*—and *received* unworthily. ' Whoever does not *receive* the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.' Unless we note the significance of this word ' receive ' we shall neither understand this story nor the next.

As an heir of the Kingdom of God every little child is venerable. That is a Christian conception. If a certain sort of interest in child-life is modern and referable immediately to recent (but not the most recent !) developments of psychology, that does not hinder us from tracing it ultimately to Jesus. It developed late, but so did many a fruit of the Christian tree—and doubtless ' there is still more light to break from God's holy Word.'

In fact, this new appreciation of children was not slow in manifesting itself. It was tardy only in developing in certain directions. One of its earliest and deepest manifestations was the universal practice of infant baptism. If this too was a *development*, it can at all events be traced

back to the very border of the Apostolic age, and it came about so naturally that there was not a whisper of dissension. Yet it was a grave matter to put children upon the same plane of Church membership as the most learned and experienced men. There was no obvious precedent for this in the pagan cults which were then prevalent, and we are at a loss to discover its origin, if it may not be traced to the spirit and example of Jesus. I wonder whether those who feel compelled to reject this practice ' because there is no express warrant for it in the Holy Scripture,' may not be inclined to wish that they might observe a custom so consonant with the mind of Christ. Jesus himself ' touched ' the children sacramentally. Why should any sacrament be now denied them ? He himself declared, ' To such as these belongs the Kingdom of God.' How small a matter it is then that they should be admitted into the *Church*, and admitted expressly by a sacrament. These words do not ' expressly ' justify the practice of infant baptism, but they express the deep truth which underlies this custom and which prompted a totally new attitude towards children.

The institution of orphanages and other means for protecting destitute children can claim no express warrant in Holy Scripture, but also this development of Jesus' pregnant word did not tarry long. It was characteristic of the early Church and of the Middle Ages.

We may be surprised to note that the new interest in children did not early show itself in Christian art. But that will not appear so strange if we consider how completely subservient were the early Christian artists to the formal traditions of classical art. The art of Greece and Rome furnished no apt models for the representation of the Christian idea of the child. What appealed to the ancients was the drollery of children, and that is what they represented in their art. All pagan art is alike in this. We are familiar with it especially in Chinese and Japanese pictures of children. Only the Christian feeling was different, and for lack of appropriate models the new spirit found for a long time no way of clothing itself in the forms of art. It was only divine children that classical art depicted with reverence : the infant Bacchus, and Horus in the arms of

Isis—the dear little Harpocrates who was the favourite *bambino* of the ancient world. For this reason the Christ Child was the first development of the child theme in Christian art, and it is natural that the new interest in childhood centred in the divine Infant and his Mother. Yet even this theme was rare, and no other pictures of children appeared in Christian art till late in the Middle Ages. Then, with the Renaissance, a new spirit began to prevail, the exaltation of humanity. Nothing could symbolize it so aptly as the perception of the innocence of childhood. Children became angels for the artists. But the Christian appreciation of the child is emphatically not founded upon a *perception*, but upon faith in the unseen; not upon what the child is and is seen to be phenomenally, but upon what he is believed to be existentially—an inheritor of the Kingdom of God. On that basis we can reverence a sick child, an ugly child, or a bad child. Even Wordsworth in his most exalted vein has to admit that what we reverence in the child is not what we perceive in him:

> Thou whose exterior semblance doth belie
> Thy soul's immensity.

That applies also to a *man*. Only, instead of 'soul's immensity,' I would say (eschatologically—like St. Paul, Rom. $8^{18}$), 'the glory that is to be revealed in us.' Man's glory—the glory of all flesh, in spite of its soul's immensity—'is like the flower of the grass,' says St. Peter (I. $1^{24}$). And yet St. Paul dares to declare, 'We exult in the hope of the glory of God' (Rom. $5^{2}$). I do not feel that I am getting far from Jesus when I turn to Paul. But all our talk about the soul's immensity seems very far away—both from Jesus and from sober science. A modern English philosopher regards this world as 'a vale of soul making.' I like the phrase because it is so poetical. And indeed what phantasmagoria of soul making is displayed in the history of this planet! Discoverable in metals (by Bose), in micro-organisms (by Binet and Jennings), in plants (by Fechner and Francé), in insects (by Fabre), and in the animals which are closer to the line of man's ascent. And in man himself what soulishness our psychologists reveal! If we prefer the

word soulfulness, we had better apply it to the rose. And Jesus came to give the last boost to this almost completed process of soul making! 'Beyond man' we have already in view the apotheosis of Soul. I should think that something more was needed, and that in this 'vale' something more was preparing, though imperceptibly—namely, spirit—and that beyond the vale of the shadow of death it would be manifested—with 'the manifestation of the sons of God.' But that is eschatology—and everyone agrees that in our day, whatever we may salvage from the wreck of the Gospel, we cannot accept *that*.

At the same time almost everyone seems to suspect that something essential is lacking in *our* Gospel. It might be just *that*—which Jesus thought so essential. One of the most exciting thrills reserved for our day may be the rediscovery of the Gospel! But how is it that we could wander far from the Gospel of Jesus Christ when we had no intention of going astray, but only wanted to interpret it in terms 'acceptable' to our generation, and were careful to 'separate the kernel from the husk'? Nothing is easier than to err. We have only to change a little of the Gospel every day—and in a generation there is nothing left of it. We pick and choose, like the Rev. Mary Baker G. Eddy, and in the end we have no guarantee that the modern standardized Christianity of Pan-protestantism will be any more Christian than hers.

We return to the children and note that Jesus not only consented to 'touch' them but did much more. In the first place, 'he put his arms around them.' He did not need to do that to assure them of an inheritance in the Kingdom of God, but obviously it was a very strong assurance because it was a proof that he loved them. This was a gesture well calculated to vex the Apostles, and it scandalized two of the Evangelists. Matthew and Luke both omit the statement that Jesus embraced the children, and in the next paragraph they suppress the indication that Jesus 'loved' the young man. Such spontaneous movements of affection seemed to them too human. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Mark for handing down the story just as it came to him.

Putting his arms around the children was a way of touching them. But Jesus did more than that: he 'blessed them'—and he blessed them in the most solemn way that was known in Israel, by laying his hands upon them. Because this was a solemn and formal act I have in my translation used our most solemn and formal description of it: 'he blessed them by the laying on of his hands.' The twelve Apostles were not ordained by the laying on of hands—the children were! Ordained to what? They were ordained to be inheritors of the Kingdom of God—something far more important than any special priesthood or apostleship. Could Jesus have given a more complete sacramental assurance?

In the earliest times (as in the Orthodox Churches to-day) infants received the laying on of hands when they were baptized. Psychology suggests serious reasons for deferring confirmation until the age of puberty. And yet we may feel that the rule of the Western Church is 'a corrupt following' of Jesus and his Apostles, who did not defer the laying on of hands till children had 'come to years of discretion' and could 'say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and also answer to such other questions, as in the short Catechism are contained.'

The Kingdom of God is for babes, but the Gospel is hard to understand. When we call it 'simple' we mean that we are resolved to find nothing paradoxical or mysterious in it. Only a few platitudes, like being good and loving one another. In reality, there was never a teacher who gave his disciples so many surprises as did Jesus. Mystery and paradox describe his method. If we can call his teaching simple, it is only in the sense that he makes no effort to explain or resolve the contradictions which emerge in it. He has left that to the theologians. He himself gives us nothing that is thought out and sophisticated, but rather pure gold in nuggets—thoughts that are primitive, original, elemental.

The contradictions of the Holy Scripture have been grist for the theologians during nearly two thousand years. By this milling process the Gospel has been made 'simple' and Jesus' most startling sayings trite. Yet I do not know

if anyone before Shakespeare ever noticed the deep dissonance between this paragraph and the one which we are about to study—and I know that no commentator before Wellhausen ever noticed that he noticed it. In the last scene but one of the tragedy of 'King Richard II' that unhappy monarch peoples his lonely dungeon with his thoughts:

> And these same thoughts people this little world,
> In humours like the people of this world,
> For no thought is contented. The better sort,
> As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd
> With scruples, and do set the Word itself
> Against the Word:
> As thus, 'Come little ones,' and then again,
> 'It is as hard to come as for a camel
> To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'

'Come, little ones'—it is so easy to enter the Kingdom of God that even the children are assured of it, and grown men have only to stoop to *receive* it. That was the amazing impression all must have got from Jesus' encounter with the children. And then again, 'It is as hard to come as for a camel, *etc.*' A good man who has kept all the commandments from his youth but shrinks from the extremest act of heroism cannot enter where the children go so easily! That is the contradiction which *unites* these two stories and attests their genuineness. It is impossible that Jesus did not say these words, for no one else could have said them.

¶ 65. None is good but God.

Mk 10[17–22]. **And as he started again on his way one came running and knelt at his feet and demanded, 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit Eternal Life?' [18] But Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. [19] You know the Commandments: *Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honour your father and your mother.*' [20] 'Teacher,' he said, 'all these commandments I have observed from my youth.' [21] Jesus then looking at him loved him and said to him, 'There is one thing you**

**lack. Go and sell what you possess and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven ; then come back and follow me, carrying the cross.' [22] But his face fell at that saying, and he went sadly away, for he was one who had a great deal of property.'**

There is no passage in the Gospels so ill-fated as this story of the rich man, his impetuous coming, his sorrowful departure, and Jesus' sombre comment. Other passages have been misunderstood, but this, we may say, has not been understood at all. And the prime reason of this is that no one has been disposed to attach any significance to the connection with the foregoing incident which is plainly intimated by the phrase, ' as he started again on his way.' Therefore no reason is apparent for the impetuous enthusiasm with which this man bursts upon the scene, and we feel that this must be discounted as characteristic of the Evangelist's lively style. No sufficient reason can be discerned for the brusque reception he met with, and we are offended by the severe conditions Jesus makes. The point in which the subsequent colloquy culminates has been blunted by a very early corruption of the text, so that there is no clear-cut contradiction left to remind us of what Jesus said to the children.

This ill-fated passage is now commonly cited to prove that Jesus did not feel himself to be sinless. But if it proves that, it proves more. It proves that he did not count himself a good man. The author of St. Matthew's Gospel was afraid St. Mark's story might give that impression, and so he altered it—in such a way that matters are made much worse. He makes the man ask (Mt $19^{16}$), ' What good deed must I do to gain Eternal Life ? ' and he makes Jesus answer, ' Why do you ask me about what is good ? ' He makes it appear that Jesus was so bad that he could not give good advice ! That is characteristic of ' St. Matthew,' and it is one of the traits which plainly proves the secondary character of his Gospel. He liked to retain the original words even when he altered the sense. He was shocked at the suspicion cast upon the goodness of Jesus, and hardly less at the statement which represented the young man as *so good*

that he could boast of observing all the Commandments *from his youth*. So he alters the phrase as follows: 'And the *young* man said, "I have observed all these."' That is the only express indication we have that this man was young. But he may have been young all the same, and I shall continue to regard him as a youth.

We stumble needlessly over this word. It is not likely that Jesus himself proclaimed his sinlessness (Jn $8^{46}$), but we have strong reasons for clinging to the belief that 'though he was in all points tempted like as we are,' yet he was without sin (Heb. $4^{15}$). That sets him, indeed, apart from humanity, but not so far apart that he is 'unaffected with the spirit of our infirmity.' We can believe that Jesus by the conquest of his temptations learned to know what sin is, better than we know it by temptation and defeat. We might be arrogant with God if we could claim that Jesus too was a sinner. But this belief (I will not call it a dogma) is not put in jeopardy by the passage we are now studying. It is absurd to suppose that Jesus was ever given an occasion for denying that he was sinless. No Jew could conceive such a thing of any man. And this impetuous youth, who had never seen Jesus before and knew him only as a famous 'teacher,' certainly did not mean to imply (even as an extravagant compliment) that he was a man without sin. His mode of address, 'Good teacher' (like, Good Sir) might have been meant as a mere civility. But then, how uncivil of Jesus to respond as he did!

We have created a difficulty where none exists. It is not an apologist who finally comes to our relief, but the redoubtable Professor Wellhausen, with the dry remark that 'good' (*agathos*) here means kindly (*gütig*) rather than sinless. In reality we have invented our difficulty. Jesus had just showed himself so kind to the children, and the teaching the young man had overheard seemed very *good* to him. How much easier than the way prescribed by the Pharisees for entering the Kingdom of God! And, indeed, how much easier than the careful observance of all of God's laws! The Jews, because they thought of God chiefly as the author of the 'ten thousand precepts of the Law,' were inclined to regard him as 'a hard man,' as Jesus

ironically intimates in the parable of the talents (Mt $25^{24}$). No wonder that the young man, when he saw this kind teacher receding down the road, ran after him impetuously and knelt before him to demand what particular thing he had to do to be assured of the same inheritance which was promised to the children. We see here that Eternal Life was a term already used by the Jews as equivalent to the Kingdom of God. ' Inherit ' is a nice word which suggests easy acquisition, and yet it implies that some filial duty must be done. The words of this good teacher could not in a moment dispel the notion deeply engrained in the Jewish consciousness that something must be *done* before one might hope to enter the Kingdom of God. The mere ' touch ' of Jesus might suffice for children, but hardly for a man. Perhaps this good teacher might prescribe some merely symbolical act, or devise a sacrament appropriate for grown men.

In the polite address of this young man Jesus detected that he was fleeing to him as a refuge from God, and his anger (his jealousy for God) blazed out in the reply by which he repelled such homage. ' Why do you call me good ? No one is good but God alone.'

This is a warning for us. How often in Christendom have men sought in the good Christ a refuge from the just severity of God. This is peculiarly the error of Evangelical Christianity. The Pantocrator of the Greek Churches, or, let us say, that most worthy Judge Eternal whom Michelangelo has depicted in the Sistine Chapel, can hardly be used in the rôle of saving us from God. Man then flees for refuge to the Virgin Mother—away from Christ. It is not for us to blame this too impetuous young man.

But Jesus' warning is, Back to God ! and back to his Commandments ! It is not merely, as Lowell said, that ' the Ten Commandments will not budge,' but there is none so good, none so merciful as the author of these Commandments. Jesus does not reflect here how futile it is to try to flee from God—an experience which is as familiar to us as the words of the 139th Psalm :

> Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
> But the night shineth as the day.

He thinks rather how foolish it is to flee from our only protector. Friedrich Rückert in his *Strung Pearls* quotes a Mohammedan saying which is an apt expression of Christ's teaching :

> Before God there is no flight but only to him.
> From a father's sternness no revolt avails :
> Love is the sole defence a child can have.

Goodness is of course the sum of all moral perfections, but Jesus here was thinking chiefly of the one perfection which he counted the highest, and which he saw exemplified supremely in his heavenly Father, who 'is kind even to the unthankful and the evil' (Lk $6^{35}$). That is the sort of 'perfection' he recommended to men (Mt $5^{48}$). Compared with the loving-kindness of God, no one is perfect, no one is good.

'You know the Commandments.' Jesus did not recite them with such punctilious accuracy as we require children to do before they are confirmed. He is not careful about the order, he omits the one about coveting, and he adds the prohibition, 'Do not defraud.' He omits also the 'first table' of the Law, the four Commandments which on another occasion ($12^{28-31}$) he summarized in the obligation to love God. That Commandment Jesus called the 'chief,' and his omission of it here was surely not accidental. Perhaps his reason for omitting it was the same which prompted him to describe man's duty to man, not in a summary phrase but in concrete detail. Here was a young man seeking an easier way than righteousness. Jesus would not let him off with a vague protestation of love for his fellow-men, nor permit him to elude the obligations of social righteousness on the plea that he was absorbed in the service of God. It was characteristic of Jesus to define man's duty in concrete terms. According to the Synoptic Gospels, he never but once spoke of love, whether towards God or man, in a vague and general way. That once was when he summarized the Ten Commandments by phrases borrowed from the ancient Scriptures. This is surprising to us because the Fourth Gospel gives us such a different impression of Jesus. And it is important to observe it, because there is

danger that by ' charity ' vaguely conceived we cover from ourselves a multitude of sins. According to the Synoptists, Jesus did stress our obligation to love our enemies, but that is a commandment neither general nor vague.

There was no sentimentalism in Jesus' ' goodness,' or in his notion of the goodness of God. His great faith had no likeness to the easy-going optimism we indulge in so long as Fate caresses us. Fate was not kind to Jesus. He knew God as one who exacted obedience even unto death. God had separated him from his family, made him an object of hatred to the pious, driven him from his own country, and now was leading him to Jerusalem, where he was to be betrayed by a disciple, rejected by his people, delivered to the Gentiles, and put to death as a criminal. And yet he says, None is so good as God, none is really good but he. It was not as a mere matter of course but a great *nevertheless* that in the Garden of Gethsemane he addressed this God as ' Father,' and that even on the Cross he cried, ' *My* God.' That Jesus, in spite of his own experience, attained his lofty faith in God's incomparable goodness, and maintained it to the end, was his most amazing deed. (I can go so far as that with the Liberals.)

It is a surprise to us to hear the young man affirm, ' Teacher, all these commandments I have observed from my youth.' We have seen how this scandalized St. Matthew. The man certainly did not mean to affirm that he was sinless, but evidently he was a good ' young ' man. (I persist in thinking of him as young, if only for the reason that he was so frank and so impetuous.) Jesus, too, if he was not surprised by this reply, was at least prompted to regard this young man attentively—' and looking at him he *loved* him.' Matthew and Luke both omitted that phrase, as they did the reference to caressing the children, because they thought it too human. But it is really essential for our understanding of this passage.

' Jesus loved him and said, " Come and follow me." ' That is all that is essential in this passage. All that I have left out, though it looms so large in our eyes, and though it proved in fact an impediment to the young man, was for Jesus incidental. Jesus often repelled would-be disciples.

But this man had not proposed to follow Jesus, and when we are told that Jesus loved him we cannot suppose that he sought to repel him. In fact, he expressly invited him to be one of his followers, and we are told of no other case where such an invitation was refused. 'Carrying the cross,' sounds repellent; and, in fact, we may doubt if it is genuine. It is not contained in several of the most reliable texts, and Westcott and Hort omit it. For all that, Jesus may well have been candid enough to give warning of what was involved in following him for the next ten days. It was not an item he was likely to forget on his way to Jerusalem, and he had already warned the twelve. It may seem to us of small importance whether this phrase is included or not. We are likely to think that, 'Go, sell what you possess and give the money to the poor,' was enough to repel the man, and was uttered in order to repel him. It has a different complexion if by the 'one thing lacking' Jesus meant his own friendship and companionship. That was more than he had offered to the children.

Matthew clearly attaches a different meaning to it. But he had to alter the phrase to do so. He makes the young man ask, 'What do I lack yet?' while Jesus replies, 'If you would be *perfect*, go and sell, *etc.*' Matthew would intimate that for evangelical 'perfection' something more is needed than obeying the Law and the Prophets. It means evangelical poverty, the following of Jesus and martyrdom. However, even Matthew would not claim that so much was necessary for merely entering the Kingdom of God or inheriting Life—and that was all the young man was inquiring about. Matthew expressed a notion which afterwards prevailed in the Church, but we may hesitate to ascribe it to Jesus. For when he summarized the whole Law in two commandments he solemnly affirmed (12[31]), 'There is no other commandment greater than these.' Not even the following of Jesus and martyrdom, we must suppose. On that occasion the scribe agreed with him that love is 'more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices,' and St. Paul adds that it is more than giving one's body to be burned, or giving one's goods to feed the poor. That seems to have been Jesus' belief, for to the scribe he said, 'You are not far

from the Kingdom of God '—meaning that the Kingdom is not far, and that when it comes this man would find himself in it.

For these reasons I cling (in spite of Matthew) to the belief that Jesus was offering the young man a most precious privilege and conceived that he was exacting only an obvious condition. The condition seems arbitrary to us only when we conceive of ' following ' in a mystical sense. If this man was to be a companion of Jesus and his poor Apostles, it was obviously necessary for him to give up all that he had. That was, in fact, a requirement for Apostleship, though not for discipleship in the broader sense.

Perhaps Jesus did not reflect that he was coupling his gracious invitation with a hard condition. For we must remember that he thought of wealth as an incumbrance, apt to afflict a man with cares (Mt $13^{22}$), and totally incompatible with freedom and joyousness. And he thought that nothing was easier than to escape this burden. One had only to sell what he had and give to the poor—and he would have treasure in heaven. This was, in fact, the enticement he held out to the young man. In effect, he was asking him to give up nothing, but only to put what he had in a safer place.

We have to confess that this way of salvation is not so easy for us as it appeared to Jesus. Conscience would deter us from following this course, if avarice did not. We have just scruples about indiscriminate almsgiving, for we have learned that money can be put to more beneficent uses. But in the Palestine of Jesus' day there may have been no better way for a man to dispose of his wealth than to ' scatter abroad and give to the poor.' Our modern institutions of beneficence were not within the field of vision. Jesus was not speaking to us, and we would do well to put ourselves in the young man's place—rather than put him in ours. For us the meaning of wealth (whether for better or for worse) has been altered by the capitalistic system of industry, and it is as hard for a man now to dispose of his wealth wisely as it is to gather it honestly.

' But his face fell at that saying, and he went sadly away, for he was one who had a great deal of property.'

If we are inclined to take sides with the young man, it

will be well for us to consider what was meant by ' a great deal of property ' two thousand years ago in a remote part of Judaea. Then the glamour fades from our romantic picture of the rich young man. We realize that his wealth would seem to us squalid misery. Wars had impoverished Palestine, and the Jews were now crushed by the double weight of the Roman tax and the Temple tribute. Commerce was conducted on a small scale, and industry was pretty nearly confined to the household. In the country there was no occupation more profitable than farming, and this man was probably a well-to-do peasant, with a small plot of arable land, a little stone cottage, and wealth that was reckoned in sheep and dunghills. Perhaps he had a small hoard of coin laid up in a napkin and buried in the ground. (' A ruler,' St. Luke calls him. But who ruled except Romans ?) In the parable of the talents Jesus speaks of sums of money which amounted to sixty thousand dollars ; but then he was speaking to a metropolitan audience and depicting wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. In the country a shilling was a fair day's wage, and a woman who found again ten shillings she had lost would rouse the neighbourhood to share in her rejoicing. In Jesus' parables the paragon of independent wealth was the man who had stored in his barns enough food for many years. A pitiful sort of security and opulence compared with bonds and a bank account.

These considerations may render us indignant with the young man who, for the sake of such paltry property as he possessed, lost the chance of being acclaimed in all the world (' wherever this Gospel shall be preached ') as an Apostle of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus knew how much he was offering, and therefore he made so sombre a comment upon its rejection. He still entertained hope for this man's salvation, but the rejection of so great an offer must have seemed to him a bad sign. A man's character is often revealed and his fate decided by a more trivial choice than this. Did not this choice bring to light an essential meanness of spirit ? That is what Dante calls *viltate* in the famous line which records the Great Refusal :

*Chi per viltate fece il gran refiuto.*

¶ 66. The Impossible Possibility.

Mk $10^{23-27}$. **And Jesus looking around said to his disciples, ' How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God. [25] It is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.' [24] The disciples were amazed at these words, but Jesus responded again by saying, ' Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God ! ' [26] Then they were in greater consternation and said to themselves, ' Who then can be saved ? ' [27] But Jesus looked at them and said, ' With men it is impossible—but not with God, for everything is possible with God.'**

Jesus must have expected the young man to give up all to follow him, for he was evidently disappointed by the rejection of his offer. Left alone again with his disciples, he looked around upon them and said, ' How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God.' They might well be surprised at such a saying, for it seems to contradict what he had just said with reference to children. However, it was not a complete contradiction, for it applied only to ' those who have riches,' and what amazed them most was the extravagant simile of a camel trying to get through a needle's eye. But Jesus proceeded to make the contradiction absolute when he said, ' Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God ! ' That means for everybody—for you and me. It is natural that the Apostles were panic-stricken. Browning, in *Easter Day*, aptly describes their chagrin :

> And where we looked for crowns to fall,
> We find the tug's to come,—that's all.

It has to be confessed that the text I am pledged to follow (and have declined to follow only in this one instance) completely ruins this interpretation by adding, in the 24th verse, after ' how hard it is,' the consoling qualification, ' for those who trust in riches.' That relieves all who are not rich—but also all the rich who do not put their trust in riches. But then we are left without any reason for the consternation of the Apostles. The saying did not really apply

to them at all. It is very easy to imagine why such a clause might have been *added* to the original text, and no reason is obvious for its omission in several of our most ancient authorities. For my part, I have no doubt that it was an interpolation.

But there is another question involved here which goes deeper than textual criticism. I have ventured to invert the order of two verses (putting 24 after 25), and for that I can claim no serious textual authority. For though Codex Beza (D) does the same thing, I have no doubt that it was a conjectural emendation, resorted to for the purpose of making the text more coherent. That aim is really accomplished, and in this instance the success is great enough to justify so simple a device. We now have in Jesus' words a true climax (hard for the rich—as hard as for a camel—hard for all) faithfully reflected by the disciples' advance from amazement to consternation. We can understand now why Jesus, returning to a recent theme, addresses his disciples as 'children.' It implies that this saying was uttered affectionately though it was meant to apply to *them* —no stronger or wiser than children, in reality—and it significantly associates this saying with its polar opposite, the sentence which Jesus pronounced when he blessed the little children. 'Who then can be saved?' was the thought which brought such consternation to the disciples. But no such disquieting doubt is suggested by the common text. We need the climax to explain it. And the extravagant simile of the camel and the needle's eye, though it might cause amazement, did not justify consternation in any but the rich.

I began by remarking that this is an ill-fated passage. Not only did the copyists meddle with it, but the later Evangelists, Matthew and Luke, united in suppressing its point. That they easily accomplished by dropping the absolute statement of verse 24. Then came the commentators and disposed of what was left—that is, of the camel and the needle's eye. They were not willing to admit that Jesus could say anything so absurd—in spite of the fact that he uttered another word even more ridiculous, about people who 'choke at a gnat and swallow a camel' (Mt $23^{24}$).

It was explained that a ' needle's eye ' was not a needle's eye but the postern gate of a city—an opening far too small for a camel, but not presenting to the imagination an impossibility so outrageous. That is accepted to-day by mediocre interpreters as an acquisition of modern archaeology, but Shakespeare's phrase, ' the postern of a small needle's eye,' proves that he already knew it and discarded it. It is fake archaeology any way, and one might as reasonably affirm that by a ' camel ' Jesus only meant a mouse. However, for those who like that sort of thing, that is just the sort of thing they would like. Celsus, the sharpest critic of Christianity in the second century, gives us a measure of his literary taste when he says that with this word about the needle's eye Jesus was simply spoiling a fine saying of Plato's to the effect that it is difficult for a man to be very rich and very pious at the same time.

' But Jesus looked at them and said, " With men it is impossible—but not with God, for all things are possible with God." '

This is the amazing resolution of the paradox which had so astonished and disconcerted the disciples. The solemnity of these words was doubtless enhanced by Jesus' tone and manner. Some impression of this the Evangelist seeks to impart to us when he says that Jesus ' looked at them.' He regarded his disciples earnestly and fixed their whole attention upon him before he uttered these weighty words. Just before this it is said that he ' looked around '—as though to descry in the faces of his disciples what effect the young man's departure had made upon them. Now he looks steadily at them. Both expressions are so aptly chosen that I, at least, cannot dismiss them as trivial examples of Mark's picturesque style. At any rate, the word Jesus here utters is a profound revelation of the character of his faith. In man he had no faith at all, but in God a faith illimitable. In this faith he found comfort when he was disappointed in the good young man. God whose goodness is incomparable and whose power limitless may still save him, in spite of his riches. With God that is no more impossible than the salvation of a poor man. For no man is saved but by the goodness and omnipotence of God.

The thought of the omnipotence of God may plunge us into despair if we insist that it must be manifested every moment and imagine that the whole complexity of this world is the adequate reflection of his will. Then all our sickness and all our suffering, all the iniquities of the world and all the evil that is within us, is simply God's will. 'This good God, what he would do if he could!—could if he would!' By such discordant faith our smallest sorrows are changed from mole-hills into mountains, and a Christian finds it impossible to bear what a pagan, whose gods are neither good nor omnipotent, might endure with noble fortitude. We must agree with Leibnitz that if God's goodness and omnipotence seem in conflict, it is the second we must sacrifice. But for Jesus no such conflict could arise. Nothing could be more opposed to the Christianity of Christ than a static conception of God's omnipotence. As a religion of salvation it assumes that this world is anything but the adequate expression of God's will; by its other-worldliness it condemns this world; and by its decisive orientation towards the future it teaches us to pray for and expect a Day when God's will shall be manifested on earth as it is in heaven. This good God has all means and all time at his disposal. It may be that the omnipotent God could not prevent that young man from going sadly away. But though he did go away, Jesus did not cease to hope for him. He found comfort in eschatology.

¶ 67. Rewards.

Mk 10[28–31]. **Peter ventured to say to him, 'Well, we have left all and followed you.' [29] Jesus answered, '*Amen*, I say unto you, Everyone who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel [30] shall receive a hundred times as much—now in this present time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields (along with persecutions),—and in the age to come, Eternal Life. [31] But many who are first shall be last, and the last first.'**

After the climax comes the anti-climax. The disciples were so much cheered up by Jesus' last solemn word that

immediately they began to think again about the rewards they would soon be enjoying in the Kingdom of God. The difficulty of entering in did not trouble them any longer when they were assured that God would attend to that. They at least had done what Jesus required of the young man. Now they wanted to know what their rewards would be, and Peter as usual was their spokesman. I like to think that he told this story on himself, revealing how foolish he was and how well Jesus answered him according to his folly. In fact, Jesus knew so well what was coming that he answered the question before it was put. Matthew makes things clearer by stating the question, ' What shall we have therefore ? '

Anti-climax was not infrequent in Jesus' story. His followers were always bringing him down from the sublime. On this occasion he stoops to the ridiculous. It seems wonderful that Jesus was able to end his story with a tragedy so perfect. The last days were altogether sublime, and he succeeded even in dying alone.

Peter's question jars on us the more because it was so near to those last days. We incline to the theory that virtue is its own reward, that it is immoral to wish for any other rewards and impertinent to inquire about them. That we have learned from Kant. But that theory, perhaps, is strung too high for mortal man beneath the sky, and we must confess that Jesus does not encourage it. It is true that he does not expect any man to save himself by his works, but he promises that good works shall have an appropriate and proportionate reward. That does not mean an equivalent and just reward, but one which is reckoned in the proportion of some stupendous ratio. The parable of the talents is an example of that sort of reckoning, and here in the text before us the proportion stated is a hundredfold. It is not surprising, therefore, that the disciples expected a reward, and if Jesus rebuked them here, it was only for pressing their claim inopportunely.

It was a very light rebuke he administered with smiling irony, but it made the Apostles look ridiculous.

Here, however, we begin to have trouble with the copyists and with the other Evangelists. No one wanted

to believe that Jesus could say anything so absurd—or indeed anything humorous. I shall not linger over the efforts copyists have made, and registered in some of our most venerable texts, to make this passage conform to their notion of the unbroken solemnity of Jesus' speech and behaviour. Matthew and Luke dealt with it still more freely. It was not enough for them to drop the little phrase, ' with persecutions,' which crops up so unexpectedly to our dismay ; they eliminated all reference to temporal rewards. Luke thought ' a hundredfold ' too extravagant and put ' manifold ' in its place. Nothing is left, therefore, but a promise of blessedness in the coming Kingdom. In that there was clearly no irony. But according to St. Mark, Jesus surpassed Mohammed with his promises of future bliss. We have reason to doubt whether a hundred wives were not included before the passage was pruned by the copyists. At all events, a hundred mothers is still more extravagant. Job himself had no such recompense as Jesus promised, ' now in this present time.' All this and heaven too ! If only there were not a string attached to it. The promise of ' persecutions ' snatched all these other promises away.

Even the celestial promise is followed by a disquieting word. Matthew expands the compendious expression ' Eternal Life,' reporting the promise, ' you shall sit on twelve thrones to govern the twelve tribes of Israel.' This saying is in a style so antique that we can hardly reject it. But inasmuch as Jesus, only a moment later, soberly disclaimed authority to dispose of the chief places in the Kingdom of God, we must suppose that if he uttered this quaint saying here, it was in continuation of his ironic vein, and his last caution must have been sobering to throne-pretendants : ' But many who are first shall be last.'

We might well refuse to admit the possibility of any humour or irony in Jesus, if there were not so many instances of it. The picture of a Pharisee who ' chokes at a gnat and swallows a camel ' cannot be drawn without humour. Is there nothing humorous in the picture of the sleepy man who answers his friend at midnight, ' Trouble me not : the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed ;

I cannot rise and give thee ' ? There is a very grim humour in the picture of the Pharisee and the publican praying in the Temple. Jesus detected not only the sublime in man and the abject, but also the little weaknesses and follies which were best treated with a smile. He revered the little images of God who were heirs of the Kingdom, but he was not unobservant of the droll aspects of child-life, the funny games of children in the village square, and their inconsequent behaviour : ' We piped to you, and you did not dance ; we wailed to you, and you did not weep.' Many are scandalized at the parable of the unjust steward, because they are unwilling to admit that Jesus was capable of employing irony. More clearly ironical than this is the saying preserved in extra-canonical sources : ' Be ye wise money-changers.' We have no more reason to doubt that than to reject the canonical saying, ' Be ye wise as serpents.' In another place (p. 295) I have remarked upon Jesus' pretence at pettifogging in Mt 5[21, 22]. Commonly we confound irony with sarcasm. But, in fact, it may be perfectly genial. It is the one ' figure of speech ' commonly used by children, and notoriously it was used by Socrates as his favourite method of instruction. If we do not recognize the irony of the passage we have just been studying, there remains nothing for us but to reject it as a whole.

¶ 68. Second Prediction of the Passion.

Mk 10[32-34]. **And they were following the road which led up to Jerusalem, and Jesus marched ahead of the disciples, and they were dismayed, and the people who followed were afraid. And for the second time he took the Twelve aside and proceeded to tell them what was going to happen to him.** [33] **' See ! ' he said, ' We are going up to Jerusalem ! and the Son of Man will be delivered up to the high priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him to the Gentiles,** [34] **and they will mock him and spit on him and scourge him and kill him, and after three days he will rise again.'**

' Up to Jerusalem ' was the common phrase, indicative of the fact that the last stage of the journey was an ascent,

from whatever side one approached the sacred city. This description of Jesus' aloofness on the march we have already remarked upon, assuming that it was applicable not to one moment only but to the whole journey, for he was carrying the same heavy secret all the time. His strange demeanour dismayed the Twelve and suggested to the larger following an unaccountable fear.

The Twelve had been with Jesus and alone with him ever since he left Galilee for the region of Tyre, but in Mark's story this distinctive name has not occurred since the account of their mission ($6^7$). That is surprising. But we may reflect that while they were alone with Jesus there was no need to distinguish them from other disciples. Now that need is obvious. For on the way up to Jerusalem there were other disciples in Jesus' company. At least there were the women whom we find at Jerusalem ($15^{40,41,47}$; *cp.* Lk $8^{2,3}$, $24^{10}$; Acts $1^{14}$). Mark expressly says that there were 'many' of them and that they 'came up with him.' He mentions no men besides the Twelve who came up with Jesus from Galilee, nor does later tradition know of any other men from Galilee (of all whom he had healed and forgiven and blessed) who were with him at the last, or became prominent in the Church, except his own brothers (Acts $1^{14}$). We must suppose that when he passed secretly through Galilee he summoned the women, and perhaps also his own family. But it seems more likely that the family of Jesus had gone up to the Passover on their own account, without expecting to encounter him there. So much truth as this there may be in the curious tradition recounted in the Fourth Gospel (Jn $7^{1-10}$).

Besides the disciples of Jesus there were others who followed him to Jerusalem, though they were in no proper sense his followers. Such people are referred to here by the phrase, 'those who followed after.' They were followers only in the sense that they formed the end of the procession. It was natural that many pilgrims who were encountered along the way should join the company of the celebrated prophet. In a few words the march to Jerusalem is vividly depicted. Jesus strode ahead, absorbed in his own thoughts; after him came the Twelve with the women

and whatever other disciples there may have been in his company; and they in turn were followed by a great company of pilgrims who had no thought of assuming such obligations as Jesus exacted of his 'followers.' This larger company was made afraid by Jesus' sombre aloofness. The disciples are said to have been 'dismayed,' or (as we might equally well translate the word) 'amazed.' Neither word seems to apply very naturally to the Twelve, who already knew Jesus' secret. But we must remember that neither the Messiahship of Jesus nor his Passion had yet been revealed to the larger company of the disciples. Naturally *they* were amazed and even dismayed by Jesus' tragic demeanour, which was altogether new to them and altogether unexplained. Not even now was Jesus' secret to be disclosed to *them*, for the Twelve were taken aside before they were told what still they had to learn about the Passion.

This situation is plainly enough described in the text as I have translated it. But I have to confess that the Greek text is not so clear. I have put the word 'disciples' where St. Mark wrote simply 'them'—'Jesus was marching ahead of *them*.' Commentators whose interest is chiefly in questions of grammar call attention to this fault of St. Mark's style. He fails to indicate who is referred to by 'them' and by the 'they' who were dismayed. That is clearly a fault of style, but it is a welcome fault, because it suggests that Mark is simply transposing into the third person an account which Peter related in the first. There was no indefiniteness in Peter's account, if he related that Jesus was marching ahead of *us*, and *we* were dismayed, and those who followed *us* were afraid. He associated himself with the whole band of Jesus' personal disciples, and only when he came to the new disclosure about the Passion did he need to distinguish the Twelve.

We have observed (p. 354) that Mk $9^{31}$ is not to be regarded as a second prediction of the Passion, but as an editorial repetition of the first ($8^{31}$), rendered necessary by the dislocation of the narrative. The first prediction was the prelude to the journey and stamped it with a tragic character. Because the story of the journey was inter-

rupted, a new prediction had to be supplied at the point where the thread is resumed again. But it is a *mere* repetition, adding nothing to what was told before. We can therefore speak of this as Jesus' second prediction of his passion, and *palin* would most naturally mean 'a second time.'

This was also the *last* clear prediction of the Passion, although Jesus referred impressively to his approaching death at the Last Supper and at the last supper but one. This second prediction is so much more detailed than the first that we sceptics are inclined to think that Jesus could not have foreseen so much. 'Mock and spit upon and scourge' seems more like history than presentiment; '*Delivered up*' to the high priests suggests the betrayal by Judas, and 'deliver him to the Gentiles' is certainly to be understood here as a betrayal. Here, in place of the earlier presentiment of a violent death ('be killed'), we have the more precise prediction that his own people will 'condemn' him and that the Gentiles will scourge and kill him. In fact, the Romans permitted the Jewish courts neither to scourge nor to put to death. If Jesus anticipated crucifixion, he foresaw pretty much all that he here predicts. But, in fact, such details as we have here been dwelling on do not constitute the principle novelty of this prediction. In this paragraph (verse 32) *we* are told for the first time that Jesus' journey was leading him to Jerusalem. We have known that all along, of course—and so, of course, did the disciples who were following him, and so did all the readers of the Gospel. They all knew, too (and so do we), that they were going there for the Passover; but that fact has not been intimated as yet in St. Mark's Gospel. The point is that the disciples might readily suppose that they were going to Jerusalem merely for the sake of attending an ordinary Passover. Hence Jesus says, 'See! We are going up to Jerusalem! and the Son of Man will be delivered, *etc.*' That is to say, Here is the place! now is the time! which my prediction referred to. *That* he had to say in order to explain to the Twelve an attitude of self-absorption which so much dismayed them. This saying was hardly calculated, however, to relieve their dismay, and they now

might well be amazed that Jesus was marching steadily forward to an end which he so clearly foresaw.

If we reject the details of this prediction, we are still a long way from justifying the assertion that Jesus went up to Jerusalem discounting the danger and hoping for a favourable reception. That is, of course, a possible opinion, but it is one which St. Mark resists with might and main. If we hold it, we must make clear to ourselves that we hold it in spite of all the Gospels—in spite, one might say, of the Gospel itself. For the expectation of suffering profoundly colours the Gospel as Jesus preached it from the days of Bethsaida.

It may have been a relief to Jesus at this moment to impart his secret to his friends, but the next paragraph shows how little sympathy they could give him.

¶ 69. An Invidious Request.

Mk 10[35-45]. **And James and John the sons of Zebedee came up to him and said, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask you.' [36] But he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' [37] And they said to him, 'Grant us the privilege of sitting one on your right hand and the other on your left in your glory.' [38] But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am drinking or to be baptized with the baptism that I am being baptized with?' [39] And they said to him, 'We are able.' But Jesus said to them, 'The cup which I am drinking you shall drink, and with the baptism I am being baptized with you shall be baptized; [40] but the privilege of sitting on my right and on my left is not for me to grant, but is for those for whom it is ordained.' [41] And when the ten heard this they showed their indignation against James and John. [42] So Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers by the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men rule them authoritatively. [43] Not so shall it be with you. Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever wants to be the first among you must be the slave of all. [45] For the Son of Man himself has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'**

Perhaps this inopportune request of the sons of Zebedee did not in fact follow the prediction of the Passion so closely as it follows it in the story. The Evangelist, to make the incongruity more glaring, puts these two things side by side. It would be absurd to suppose that he had not as keen a sense of the grotesque as we. But such a request was inopportune at any moment during the march to Jerusalem, and the line of march as described in verse 32 is here implied: Jesus was striding on ahead, and the two Apostles 'came up to him' to make their request. The other disciples were at such a distance that they did not for a while apprehend what the conversation was about.

We are reminded of a similar situation at the beginning of the march as they approached Capernaum. Then, too, Jesus was walking so far ahead that the disciples supposed he would not overhear their dispute ($9^{33, 34}$). The theme also was the same, for they were disputing who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. At that time all of the Apostles were involved in the dispute, and all were properly ashamed of it. Then Jesus admonished them in much the same terms as he does here—which shows how little his admonitions were heeded. That dispute followed immediately after the first prediction of the Passion. Luke ($21^{34}$) says about the second prediction of the Passion, 'They did not understand a word of this, and the saying was hidden from them, and they did not know what he meant.' We cannot credit this statement about a prediction which was so exceedingly clear. The disciples evidently knew very well what he meant, for whenever Jesus spoke of his suffering death their thoughts leapt forward to the glory that was to follow it. In view of this bright prospect they could bear the thought of Jesus' suffering, and also the thought of their own, expecting that they would be involved in his fate. But on this dark side of the picture they were not inclined to dwell.

This story, like the stories Peter told on himself, shows how human great Apostles could be, and doubtless it was valued chiefly for that effect. Such stories as these could not avail to disparage the great heroes of the faith who had proved their steadfastness by a martyr's death, but

they might be a comfort to smaller men. Though Peter's name does not appear in this story, he was not extraneous to it. For if all of the 'ten' were indignant with James and John, Peter had the most right to be. He was one of the three privileged disciples, and is always spoken of as the first of the three. Perhaps that is only because he himself was the narrator of the stories in which he figures prominently. At all events, there was evidently no formal primacy established among the Twelve, else James and John could not have conspired to gain the first places for themselves, relegating Peter to a doubtful place. Peter was probably the spokesman who expressed the indignation of all at the presumption of James and John. But inasmuch as *all* were indignant, they all fell under the same condemnation, and were all of them rebuked by Jesus for their ambition to be great.

Luke regards this story as too scandalous to be told of saintly men, and so he omits it. Matthew, as usual, does not deal so boldly with Mark's text, but he seeks to save the reputation of the Apostles James and John by putting this request in the mouth of their mother ($20^{20}$). Very plausibly, for this is like a mother. But this is shown to be an invention by the fact that Jesus' reply is addressed to James and John.

The request was made with the ingenuous cunning children display, when they hope to entice their parents to grant them what they know they ought not to ask. They wanted Jesus to pledge beforehand that he would do whatever they were about to ask him. This innocent device is never successful, and in this instance Jesus required the disciples to tell him first what they wanted. What they wanted was nothing less than the privilege of sitting on either side of Jesus' throne as his assessors, assisting him to judge and rule the world. 'Glory,' as we have seen (p. 376), was another word for the Kingdom of God—a word which reveals to us how incommensurable was Jesus' notion with *our* all too earthly 'Kingdom of God.' For 'glory' is the light unapproachable in which God dwells. The Kingdom, as St. Matthew's phrase rightly indicates, is a heavenly Kingdom, although it is to come on earth.

We are chiefly struck by the inopportunity of such a request, following immediately upon Jesus' graphic disclosure of the sufferings that awaited him at Jerusalem. But it is significant that Jesus did not remark upon this. The request, perhaps, was not so inopportune as it seems to us. It was suggested by Jesus' prediction. The sequel shows that James and John were prepared to endure on their own account just such suffering as Jesus anticipated for himself; but the event being so near, they thought it high time the question of priority was formally settled. Somebody had to occupy the chief places in the Kingdom, and it would be unseemly if there were a general scramble for them at the last moment.

Neither did Jesus expressly rebuke the two disciples for the presumption of their request. His only rebuke (if such it may be called) was the admonition addressed to all of the Twelve. It was far from him to deny that there shall be first and last in the Kingdom of God—and also in the Church. This very admonition affirms it. He only denies (with amazing modesty!) that it belongs to him to assign the chief places in God's Kingdom. We know no better than Jesus for whom these places are 'ordained'; but in the art of the Church since the fourth century the assignment has been made in a way which would be disappointing to James and John—indeed to all the original Apostles. For St. Paul appears on the right of Jesus (though he was 'born out of due time'), and St. Peter is on the left. But perhaps the chief places were ordained for Moses and Elijah; perhaps for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; perhaps for John the Baptist.

Jesus would be the last to rebuke his disciples for the fact that they looked beyond suffering to glory. He had taught them that, and such was his own attitude (Heb. $12^{2}$). That is the attitude of all true (*i.e.* eschatological) Christianity. Christians are so presumptuous as to count it their proper sin and shame that they 'come short of the glory of God' (Rom. $3^{23}$). And yet through Christ's sufficiency they dare to 'rejoice in the hope of God's glory' (Rom. $5^{2}$). Nothing less than that! We believe that 'if we suffer with Jesus we shall also be glorified with him,' and we 'reckon

that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward' (Rom. $8^{17,18}$).

'You do not know what you ask' was the only rebuke Jesus addressed to James and John. He rebuked them for the ineptitude of their expectation. And for that we all stand rebuked. Our expectations of glory, our hymns of the heavenly country (though they are the dearest expressions we know), are all too human. The golden streets and all the rest of our vain imagery are fair sport for the critic. We know not what we ask. But when we are rebuked we can fall back upon the earliest Christian hymn we have record of, which St. Paul quoted as if it were Scripture (1 Cor. $2^{9}$), 'What eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to believe.'

In what Jesus goes on to say to his two disciples he gives us a revelation of his suffering. The present tense—'I am drinking . . . I am being baptized'—intimates that he is already tasting death in advance. If it is an enviable distinction of man that he can look beyond his present suffering, he is sadly distinguished from all the beasts by the fact that he can anticipate trouble. Jesus describes his suffering in highly figurative terms, which are strange to us, but evidently were intelligible to his disciples, for they make a prompt answer. Perhaps they were thinking of the places of honour on either side of the Lord at the celestial banquet, where the 'cup' would be a symbol of joy (Ps. $23^{5}$). But the Old Testament made them familiar with a very different significance of the 'cup' (*e.g.* Isa. $51^{17}$), and they could well understand Jesus' use of this symbol to denote the extremest suffering. 'Father, remove this cup from me,' was Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane ($14^{36}$). And baptism only too vividly suggested drowning and death (Ps. $69^{1,2}$; Rom. $6^{4}$). 'I have a baptism to be baptized with—and how I am straitened till it be accomplished!' are words which St. Luke reports ($12^{50}$). The baptism by water was the initiation of the hidden Messiah, and the baptism of death was his initiation as the Lord of glory.

We are surprised, perhaps indignant, at hearing James and John answer so glibly, 'We are able.' But Jesus expressed neither surprise nor indignation. He took them at their word, and in predicting that they would have an opportunity of suffering death for the Kingdom of God he implies that they would have the courage to encounter it. The prediction applies to both the brothers, and such a prediction would hardly have been recorded in the Gospels unless it had been fulfilled. James, we know, was the first of the Apostles to suffer martyrdom, and the tradition that his brother John died a natural death at a great age in Ephesus does not comport with this prophecy.

The only admonition Jesus was moved to give on this occasion was addressed to all of the Twelve and looked beyond them to the Church. You think that incredible, and I am tired of arguing that Jesus could have foreseen the Church. But here the argument must be convincing, I should think—at least to the eschatologists. I can put it in the form of a dilemma: either Jesus did not utter such words at all, or he conceived them to apply to a time which lay *beyond* his death and resurrection. Not, however, to the Kingdom of God, for those who serve *here* reign *there*. The theme of this admonition is not new. We are already familiar with it as interim ethics. But now the interval which remains before the Resurrection of Jesus is so brief that it would be absurd to give solemn counsel concerning it. It made little difference how the Apostles might comport themselves towards one another during the next week, and as a body they were to find during that time no occasion for behaving themselves arrogantly. It made little difference how they behaved until after the Resurrection. 'Sleep on now and take your rest' were the bittersweet words Jesus addressed to them in Gethsemane. But it made a great deal of difference how they behaved after that—and how other office-bearers in the Church might comport themselves. It is plain enough that others besides the Apostles are contemplated here—'Whoever wants to be great . . . whoever wants to be first.' We know that the dignitaries of the Church have always needed such counsel; it is applicable to all men, and appropriate to the

whole of this life which we lead during the interim which precedes the Kingdom of God.

Luke ($14^{7-11}$) reports a parable which is hardly more than a lesson in good manners. When you are invited by anyone to a wedding take the lowest place. But how much is covered by good manners! How far they go towards making human society tolerable! The essence of good manners is that we treat no one as an inferior. But Jesus' interim ethics went beyond that, requiring us to treat every man as a superior. 'Service' was his word for it—and he did not mean what we so much extol by the phrase 'public service.' How humble a thing this service (*diakonia*) is we can understand from its association with the menial office of waiting on superiors at table. It is thus at the utmost remove from the ambition of James and John to sit in the chief places at the celestial banquet. *Here*, at all events, they are to *stand* at the table and serve. St. Luke ($22^{27}$) makes this association clear by reporting this saying of Jesus in connection with the Last Supper: 'I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.' We may surmise that the Fourth Gospel derived from this saying the ceremony of washing the Apostles' feet. Incidentally we learn from this passage in St. Luke ($22^{30}$) that the ambitious Apostles may well have combined the two thoughts which we have discovered in their request: that of eating and drinking with Christ in his Kingdom, and of sitting with him on thrones to rule the tribes of Israel.

I affirm again that either Jesus did not utter this counsel, or else he meant it to apply to the Church. One can hardly discard a discourse which contains such a 'pillar passage' as Jesus' modest disclaimer of the authority to allot the chief places in his Kingdom, and concludes with a phrase which (as we shall see) could not have been invented. Between them Jesus' counsel about service is securely wedged. On the other hand, the fact that such teaching was actually current in the Church (however much it may have been disregarded) cannot fairly be used as a proof that Jesus never uttered it. When St. Paul (2 Cor $4^{5}$) speaks of himself and the whole Apostolate as 'your slaves for Jesus' sake,' we have a clear reminiscence of Jesus'

teaching, and Paul refers expressly to the Lord's example when he exhorts the people to obedience ' by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.' That Jesus was meek we should hardly have known unless he himself had told us so.

The word ' minister,' as we use it in the Church, is ambiguous, and the ambiguity is not relieved even if we use the plain word ' servant.' As a minister of the Word (or of the Gospel) a man is clothed with an awful authority : he is an ambassador of God, a vicar of Christ. The Lord's servant is a lofty title. The minister (servant) of the Church, on the other hand, cannot as such and without absurdity claim any formal authority in or over the Church. He enjoys just so much influence as his serviceableness wins for him. But there we discover the peculiar Christian conception of authority which the Church manifestly learned from Jesus. St. Paul reveals it characteristically when (in 1 Cor. $16^{15}$) he says of the family of Stephanas ' that they have laid themselves out to serve the saints,' and therefore exhorts the people ' to be in *subjection* to all such and to everyone who helps you and works hard.'

Jesus does not decry the notion of ecclesiastical rule ; he assumes the necessity of it, and here he prescribes how it shall be exercised ; he implies that among his disciples there will be some who are ' first ' and ' great,' and he teaches them how to comport themselves. The necessity of rule and regiment in the Church is implied by the pagan example which he discards. Rule there must be, but not exercised as it is ' by the Gentiles.' The reference to the Gentiles is evidently contemptuous, and a phrase which St. Luke reports ($22^{25}$) is sarcastic : ' Those who exercise authority over them are called " Benefactors ".' The contrast he had in mind was not the contrast we like to draw between civil and ecclesiastical government. It was rather between a pagan and a Christian society. If Jesus conceived at all of the Church, he did not think of it slightingly as a society existing exclusively for religious purposes and for the performance of a cult. The ideal of the Jewish theocracy prohibited a Jew from entertaining such a notion, and the earliest Church conceived of itself as an *imperium in imperio*. If the saints are to govern the world, argues

St. Paul (1 Cor. $1^{6}$), how unreasonable it is that they should bring their lawsuits before a civil court. If they are to judge even the angels, how much more the things that pertain to this life. It was this conception of the Church which brought it into conflict with the Roman Empire. Jesus' reference to civil government as it was practised by the Gentiles suggests that the Church was to exist alongside of the kingdoms of this world and in some sense under their dominion. And for the interim (for ' this present time ') such a conception was tolerable to him because he regarded the civil government with sublime indifference ($12^{17}$). Reverence for the State was no part of *his* social Gospel. On the other hand, the serviceableness which he enjoined, though it was exemplified by waiting on the table, was by no means confined to the cult at the altar. It embraced every sort of practical helpfulness, and consequently the authority which it justified applied broadly to all the essential interests of the community. Here he plainly does not co-ordinate Church and State, but contrasts them. Consequently the conflict between Church and State, though it may come to rest in a more or less stable truce, is not capable of a theoretical resolution. The old world of Europe does not share our delusion about this matter. And when we look closely we discover that our boasted solution is possible only because the one State is not faced by a single Church but by many ' denominations,' which it can treat simply as religious societies. Nevertheless, even with us the conflict may at any moment break out in its acutest form, with the declaration that ' we must obey God rather than men.' Not long ago this conflict was faced by the least ecclesiastical of denominations, the Quakers ; and in America it was not the conscientious objectors that had to yield, but the State, even in its most tyrannical phase as a nation at war.

The last word of Jesus' discourse touches unexpectedly a profounder depth : ' For the Son of Man himself has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.' There is an immense distance between the serving at table as an example of humility, and the super-humility of sacrificing one's life for others. But that is not

too great a leap for thought to make. St. Paul (Phil. $2^{6-8}$) reaches this climax without startling us, proceeding from step to step: 'emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.' That sequence, and the notion that Jesus' death was a vicarious sacrifice, is so exclusively Pauline (it is the fashion for Liberals to say) that we cannot credit this saying to Jesus. 'Pauline' is a euphemism we resort to when we wish to hide from ourselves the fact that a doctrine we reject was held by the whole Church. The whole Church had an interest in affirming that the death of the Messiah was not in vain and was not merely an exemplary act of heroism. But we must imagine that Jesus had a still more lively interest in conceiving that his own life was not being sacrificed in vain, but that it was the climax of his humble and profitable service to men. What could it avail for but to liberate men from sin and from its consequences? And for whom might it be available?—That was a question Jesus could not answer precisely. He could only say, 'for many,' and it is plausible to suppose that he found that answer in Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant of Jahve: 'By his knowledge my righteous servant shall make *many* righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities' (Isa. $53^{11}$). That word he could have found nowhere else in the ancient prophets. They spoke of a 'remnant' that was to be saved. Jesus was more optimistic. The 'many' included the remnant of Israel and looked beyond it. I cannot help thinking that this was Jesus' final answer to the question, 'Are there few that be saved?' In his humility he could not give an answer more universal or more precise. It was for God to determine who might be saved. The election of grace? Is it absurd to attribute that doctrine to Jesus? We might perhaps think so, if he had not already expressed it in this very passage. It belongs to God to 'ordain,' not only who are to occupy the chief places in the Kingdom (verse 40), but who are to enter it at all.

To affirm that Jesus could not have spoken of his life being given as 'a ransom for many' because this is a

Pauline conception is a glaring absurdity, for as a matter of fact St. Paul never used such a phrase. He thought of Jesus' death as a sacrifice 'for us,' he spoke of it as 'for you,' and he said also 'for all'; but to say 'for many' never occurred to him, nor is that expression found anywhere else in the New Testament, except in Mk $14^{24}$ and St. Matthew's parallel. It is, in fact, so strange an expression that if it occurred only once in this Gospel we might be inclined to suspect that it was used without profound significance. But it is used again with the utmost solemnity in the celebration of the Last Supper ($14^{24}$): 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many.' And here we find the most conclusive proof that this was not a Pauline phrase, for St. Paul in his account of the institution of the Supper (1 Cor. $11^{23-25}$) omits it, while of the bread he says, 'this is my body, broken for *you*.' Luke was a better Paulinist than Mark, for he also (in Lk $22^{19, 20}$) says 'for you,' with reference both to the body and to the blood. But, in fact, this was not a Pauline peculiarity. Nothing could be more natural than that the partakers of this sacrament should wish to express in their *anamnesis* of Jesus' institution the thought that his death was for *them*, as effectively it was. This, therefore, was the tradition of the institution which St. Paul received and handed on. And that naturally (and properly) is the tradition we have preferred to follow. But Jesus, very naturally, wanted to say more than that. He wanted to make it clear that his death was not exclusively for the sake of those few disciples who were then eating with him. It requires some boldness to doubt that this singular phrase St. Mark uses was the phrase actually used by Jesus.

But this phrase literally means a ransom *instead of* many. The preposition is *anti*. Jesus thought of his death as a vicarious sacrifice. St. Paul says of the 'body' that it was 'broken in behalf of you.' The preposition is *huper*. Yet the thought Mark's preposition expresses *is* Pauline, and we have some reason to be suspicious of it because the notion that Jesus was to die *instead* of his followers emerges here for the first time in St. Mark's Gospel. I suppose that it was, in fact, a new thought to Jesus. A while ago at

Bethsaida he led his disciples to expect that they might die with him. He was to encounter death, not as their substitute but as their example. But that was a long while ago. During his solitary wandering in pagan parts Jesus had attained a clearer conception of the programme of the Son of Man—the part that he was called upon to play. As they set out for Jerusalem he predicted his own death but spoke no more about the necessity of the disciples dying with him. The danger may have seemed great that the Apostles would be involved in his fate. It may be that in predicting the martyrdom of James and John he surmised that they might drink his cup *with* him, and in Gethsemane he seems to have contemplated the danger that some or all of the Three might share his 'temptation'—and might not be strong enough to endure it ($14^{38}$). But it was then impossible to think that the many who had clung to him in Galilee, the many who in ancient times had seen his day in advance, and the many who in time to come were not to see and yet to believe—impossible that all these 'many' (some already dead and some not yet born) were to die *with* him. It was clear to Jesus as he approached his death that he was dying in behalf of many and instead of them. What the many could not do—not even the 'men of violence'—God's champion was to effect, and he was to do it alone. If Jesus did not have this strong comfort as he marched to Jerusalem, how could he still march on?

The word 'ransom' Jesus did not find in Isaiah's prophecy, and we may wonder why he used it. It has been much misused in the Church since Anselm's day to support the grotesque suggestion that Christ's death was a ransom paid to the devil. That pusillanimous concession to Satan's power does not comport with Jesus' conviction that he was able to overcome the 'strong man' and spoil his goods. A ransom (*lutron*) does indeed most commonly mean the price paid for the liberation of slaves or captives. But in the ritual law it refers to the redemption of a life which was religiously dedicated or else forfeited for a crime. It is enough, I think, if we attach to it only the general sense of liberation. It is a word which nowhere else occurs in the New Testament.

There is one word in this paragraph which I have not yet noticed: 'The Son of Man has not *come* to be served.' It is the third time we have heard Jesus speak of having *come*. In the first instance ($1^{38}$) we wondered whether he might mean merely that he had come away from Nazareth; in the second instance ($2^{17}$) such an explanation seemed insufficient; and finally in this instance we have a light which illuminates the others. For it is perfectly clear that the Son of Man comes from heaven—he is associated with the clouds and the holy angels. If we say that Jesus could not have meant any such thing, we must deny at the same time that he called himself the Son of Man. Even then we do not get rid of the fact that St. Mark's Gospel is an orthodox book, that it was written in and for the Church, with the same aim which the Fourth Gospel professes, 'That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name.' Therefore we ought to make it clear to ourselves that, if we get any other notion of Jesus, it is in spite of this Evangelist —in spite of all the Gospels—we get it.

¶ 70. At Jericho.

Mk $10^{46-52}$. **Then they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a considerable crowd, Bartimaeus (i.e. Timaeus' son) the blind beggar was sitting by the side of the street.** [47] **And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth he began to cry out, 'Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me!'** [48] **And many of the people rebuked him and told him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'** [49] **And Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man and said, 'Courage! Get up, he is calling you.'** [50] **And he threw off his cloak and sprang up and went to Jesus.** [51] **And Jesus' address to him was, 'What do you want me to do for you?' And the blind man said to him, 'Rabboni, I want to regain my sight.'** [52] **And Jesus said to him, 'Go, your faith has cured (saved) you.' And at once he regained his sight and followed Jesus along the road.**

Jericho was the first town of considerable size Jesus ever entered before he reached Jerusalem. He seems to have

avoided cities purposely, for he was in the ' region ' of Tyre and Sidon and in the ' villages ' of Caesarea Philippi. Leaving Jericho, Jesus entered upon the last stage of his journey to Jerusalem. The cure of the blind beggar doubtless raised to a high pitch the enthusiasm of the crowds that journeyed with him, and helps to explain the acclamation he received on entering Jerusalem—all the more if Bartimaeus accompanied him. But nothing in the narrative has prepared us for the crowds which gathered early in the morning to witness his departure from Jericho. Indeed, even here it is only by implication we get a notion of the size of the crowd. The blind beggar hears an unwonted stir and asks what it is about. On learning that all this excitement was aroused by Jesus of Nazareth, he starts a doleful litany in the beggar's chant that was familiar to him. People thought this a jarring note in the festal acclaim of the prophet, but he kept up his chant till Jesus took note of it. There was nothing in this litany (' Have mercy on me '—*eleison*) to indicate to Jesus what this man's need was, and presumably the beggar was hidden from him by the crowd. He could not approach him, therefore, and neither could he beckon him to come ; he could not call him because he did not know his name, so he asked the people to call him. As soon as the man heard that Jesus summoned him he impetuously threw off his cloak, sprang up and leapt through the crowd with such agility that a stranger would hardly take him for a blind man. As his blindness proved curable, we may suppose that the appearance of his eyes did not clearly indicate what his malady was. Therefore Jesus was obliged to ask him first of all, ' What do you want me to do for you ? '

These are clear enough implications that the crowd was a great one. We might be sceptical about this crowd, if Luke, following an independent tradition did not corroborate the report. St. Luke's graphic story of Zacchaeus (Lk $19^{1-10}$) gives clearer evidence of a great crowd, and when we know about the miracle of this publican's conversion we need not wonder any more that a crowd was gathered to see Jesus leave the town.

This is Jesus' last miracle, and the only one which is

recorded in the second half of St. Mark's Gospel. It is related with the vivid detail which is characteristic of this Evangelist. One of the traits is common to other stories: 'Go, your faith has saved (cured) you.' To 'save' applies to the body as well as the soul. 'Go,' is not a rude dismissal but an intimation that the request is granted. 'Go,' said Jesus to the woman near Tyre, 'the demon has gone out of your daughter.' That explains St. Matthew's phrase, 'Send her away' (Mt $15^{23}$). But it is an unusual trait that Jesus cures this blind man without touching him. He does not pledge the man to secrecy. That, of course, would be absurd when the cure was effected before a crowd. But on other occasions he had taken sick people apart from the crowd before he healed them. Obviously this miracle was wrought without premeditation. It may be that Jesus had long ago determined to work no more cures, and having called this man without knowing that he was blind, found himself obliged to heal him. Or perhaps we should accept literally Jesus' word, 'Your faith has cured you,' and recognize that the man had healed himself. Jesus who himself prepared his solemn entry into Jerusalem may not have been sorry to have his fame exalted by this incident. Though he said to the man, 'Go,' he apparently made no attempt to keep him from following him along the road. That fact may be mentioned by the Evangelist merely as a proof that the man's sight was perfectly restored; but there is one circumstance which makes me suspect that Bartimaeus followed him all the way to Jerusalem and was a well-known figure in the early Church. For why else should Mark report his name so circumstantially? That is not at all in his manner. Timaeus is a Greek name, familiar to us from one of Plato's Dialogues. *Bar* (the Aramaic word for son) transforms it into a patronymic. The use of Greek names even among the Jews of Palestine shows how thoroughly Greek culture of a sort had permeated that land. Two of Jesus' Apostles had pure Greek names (Andrew and Philip), and two (Bartholomew and Thaddaeus) were perhaps derived from Ptolomaeus and Theodotus.

We are surprised (or ought to be) by one of the details of this story, which the Evangelist mentions without

emphasis and of which the crowd seemed to take no notice. The blind beggar, learning that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, addressed him as 'Son of David.'

Was that a meaningless phrase in the beggar's tiresome litany? Or was it perhaps a liturgical petition he had picked up—a sort of *Kyrie eleison*? Or was it merely a beggar's trick of conciliating favour by the use of honorific appellations—as later he addresses Jesus by the title of 'Rabboni' (superlative rabbi)? At all events, no one in the crowd seems to have thought this cry significant. And, as a matter of fact, all the Jews thought of David familiarly as their father—very much as they thought of Abraham (Lk $19^{9}$). 'Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David,' was the cry which greeted Jesus as he entered Jerusalem. And perhaps that was literally true. The late Professor Arthur Shipley amused himself by furnishing a mathematical proof that everyone who lives in Great Britain to-day and can boast a tincture of Saxon blood is descended from King Alfred. He attains that conclusion by the demonstration that every such person is descended from *every* Saxon who lived in England in Alfred's time. That proof would be still more cogent for Judaea, since between David and Jesus a longer time elapsed for the mixture of bloods, and the community was smaller and more homogeneous. It is well known (and we cannot wonder at it) that several obscure families took pains to trace their descent from David. The family of Jesus, on one side or the other, may well have done so. The question which Jesus proposed at Jerusalem about the Davidic sonship of the Messiah ($12^{35-37}$) does not imply that he lacked this important credential (see p. 459). He was interested only in affirming that this was not enough. It was a dogma of the Church that Jesus was of the seed of David (Acts $13^{22, 23}$; Rom. $1^{3}$), and doubtless it was a dogma of Mark's. He has made no mention of it in his Gospel because he does not deal with the story of Jesus' birth (seems in fact to assume that he was born in Nazareth), and because Jesus was never before addressed by this title. That is the testimony also of the other Evangelists, though they plainly affirm the Davidic descent of Jesus. And that is natural,

for though it had been known in Galilee that Jesus and his family could make such a claim, it could not have seemed important so long as they did not know that he claimed to be the Messiah.

Whether Jesus did or did not claim to be descended from David, we cannot but be surprised that a blind man in Jericho knew more about Jesus of Nazareth than this whole Gospel knows or thinks fit to tell us. For my part, I have to fall back upon the presumption that the beggar chanted this title without attaching to it any more significance than the crowd did when they heard him and tried to silence his importunity. Nevertheless, it is possible that Jesus was impressed by this fortuitous homage and was moved by this to call the man and hear his plea. For we must remember that on the evening of this same day Jesus staged his entry into Jerusalem as a king, the successor of David.

In dealing with this problem one's judgment is likely to be affected by a very natural prejudice. We have been accustomed to think that as he entered Jerusalem, Jesus was acclaimed as the Messiah. In one way or another Matthew, Luke and John confirm this notion. Matthew ($21^{9}$) reports a ' Hosanna to the Son of David ' ; Luke ($19^{38}$) has, ' Blessed the King that cometh in the name of the Lord ' ; and John ($12^{13}$) has the same thought with a variation of the phrase, ' Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.' If these phrases (or any of them) are correctly reported, the perspective St. Mark so consistently maintains turns out to be a delusion. If Jesus was hailed as the Messiah when he entered Jerusalem, he must all along, or at least for a long while, have been known as a Messianic claimant. But here Mark is still consistent with himself. The acclaim at Jerusalem, as he reports it, was not a Messianic ovation. The first ' Hosanna ' acclaims the celebrated prophet, whom many took to be Elijah, ' the Coming One ' : ' Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord.' The second—an ' Hosanna in high heaven '—acclaims the Kingdom which his coming presages : ' Blessed be the Kingdom to come, the Kingdom of our father David.' But this, we have every reason to believe, is the correct report

of the acclamation at Jerusalem. St. Mark writes the earliest of our Gospels, and in no case can we more easily detect the dependence of the other Evangelists upon him. Matthew, by a device which is characteristic of him, alters 'David's Kingdom' into 'Son of David'; Luke, beside introducing an echo of the acclaim of the angels at Jesus' birth (Lk $2^{14}$), gains his end very simply by introducing the word 'King'; and John here follows Luke, as he commonly does when he follows the Synoptists at all. Moreover, all three of these Evangelists clearly betray themselves: John by adding that 'the disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus was glorified they remembered that this had been written of him and had happened to him'; Luke by representing that the Pharisees resented this acclaim as a blasphemy; and Matthew by lamely explaining that the ovation was actually rendered to one who was simply known as 'Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'

¶ 71. Entry into Jerusalem.

Mk $11^{1-11}$. **When they were getting near Jerusalem, and had come to Bethphage and Bethany on the slope of the Mount of Olives, he sent ahead two of his disciples, [2] saying to them, 'Go into the village in front of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there an ass's colt on which no man has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. [3] And if anyone says to you, "Why are you doing that?" say, "the Lord needs it and will send it back promptly."' [4] And they went off and found the colt tied outside a door which opened on the street, and they untied it. [5] And some who were standing there said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' [6] But they answered them as Jesus had told them to do, and the men let them take it. [7] So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their coats over it, and he sat on it. [8] And many spread their coats on the road, and others strewed green things which they cut from the fields. [9] And those who went before and those who followed cried,**

**'Hosanna!**
**Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**[10] Blessed be the coming Kingdom of our father David.**
**Hosanna in high heaven ! '**
**[11] And he entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple, and after he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.**

The most important comment that needs to be made upon the entrance into Jerusalem has already been made in our concluding study of the last paragraph. The greeting with which Jesus was acclaimed on his approach to Jerusalem was not meant as a Messianic ovation. We do not have to wonder why the Roman authorities did not intervene when a crowd was proclaiming a new king, or to exclaim at the fickleness of the populace which one day acclaimed Jesus as the Messiah and a few days later clamoured for his death. The populace of Jerusalem had, in fact, little or nothing to do with the affair. It is only the Fourth Gospel that represents this as a welcome extended to Jesus by people coming forth from Jerusalem, and even he indicates that these were the multitudes that had come there for the feast (Jn 12[12, 13]). Even if (as Matthew seems to intimate, 21[10, 11]) Jesus rode the ass into the city, Luke is doubtless right in saying (19[37]) that the acclaim was uttered at the descent of the Mount of Olives. It was only in the country people could cut green things from the fields to strew in the way. Therefore the people who welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem were the pilgrims who had travelled with him through the Peraea, recruited, perhaps, at Jericho by others besides the blind man he had healed. The pilgrims from various parts realized by this time that it was no ordinary Passover they were about to celebrate at Jerusalem, and they needed only a signal to prompt them to enthusiastic acclaim of the prophet and of the Kingdom his coming presaged. Jesus himself gave them the signal when he mounted the ass's colt. They did not guess what significance he attached to this act. Matthew and John enlighten the reader by quoting the prophecy of Zecharia (9[9]) which prompted it, and thereby they suggest that the company understood his meaning. Mark, of course, understood it—his insistence upon the word ' colt ' shows knowledge of the prophecy—but

he does not quote it. We are left to imagine, as well we may, that the pilgrims were impressed by the mere fact that Jesus, after he had trudged all the way from Galilee on foot, prepares to approach Jerusalem with a certain show of dignity. A humble dignity, which to their mind must have seemed more appropriate to a prophet than a king. Mark does not say that Jesus entered Jerusalem in this fashion and rode as far as the Temple, and the fact that at the end we find him alone with the Twelve suggests that there was no demonstration in the city. If the people of Jerusalem were interested in the matter at all, at a season when crowds were entering the city from all quarters, the only explanation the pilgrims could have given them was that which St. Matthew ingenuously records (21[11]): 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.'

Nevertheless, it is clear that Jesus planned a symbolical pageant in fulfilment of a Messianic prophecy. It was like him to perform such an act, and no less like him to be content that the people should fail to perceive its significance. It reminds us of the symbolical feeding of the multitude on the shore of the lake. The people would not be likely to guess what Jesus had in mind, unless he had quoted to them the prophecy. For we can be sure that the Messianic programme the scribes had worked out left no place for a humble approach to Jerusalem on an ass. In staging this demonstration on the Mount of Olives Jesus may have had in mind Zacharia 14[4]; but the stupendous things which are described in that chapter were, according to his programme, to occur on another day when 'the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels' (Mt 16[27]; Zech. 14[5]).

When Jesus had reached the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem (Bethphage is not identifiable, but Bethany presumably is), he sent two of his disciples to the village nearest them to fetch the colt which he needed.

In sending them on this errand, so particularly described, did Jesus rely upon second sight, or did he trust to luck—or had he (as the Rationalists explained) made secret arrangements beforehand? None of all these. He trusted in God. In that moment of exaltation it was easy for him

to believe that God would provide for his Son so small a thing. And in fact, everything turned out according to his expectation—wonderfully enough, but not miraculously. It was likely that one would find a colt in any village, and still more likely that the owners would object when they saw strangers taking it away. To meet this probable emergency Jesus prescribed a reply which was the more impressive because it was mysterious: 'The Lord needs it—and will send it back promptly.' To us this reveals the ground of Jesus' confidence: it was God's business to provide the ass—it was properly *his* errand. And upon the owners, who knew nothing about Jesus of Nazareth, this mysterious hint of a divine use for their ass (with the promise that it would soon be returned to them) had the desired effect.

The mention of 'two' disciples seems incidental and without significance, but it reminds us of the rule prescribed for the first mission of the Apostles ($6^{7}$)—a good rule, which was generally followed in the early Church, and might wisely be followed to-day, if two men could be found who would preach the same Gospel.

At this point the order of march was changed. Jesus no longer went ahead, but many of the company ran before him—as they must do, indeed, if they were to strew flowers and grass and leaves in his way. This was a customary form of ovation. Luke cautiously omits it. Matthew ($21^{8}$) exaggerates when he speaks of 'branches,' for the Mount of Olives had only fruit-bearing trees, which the crowd would not wantonly destroy. 'Palm branches' (Jn $12^{13}$) were meant to be waved, not strewn on the path. Mark says merely that they made a 'litter' of such stuff (leaves, flowers, and grass) as they could harmlessly pluck along the side of the road or the edge of the fields. The acclaim the people shouted was repeated many times as they descended the Mount of Olives in full sight of Jerusalem. The meaning of it was made clear in our comment on the last paragraph.

The ovation Jesus received at Jericho prepares us in more ways than one for the acclaim he was to receive on approaching Jerusalem. Not only does it help to explain the crowd that accompanied him and their enthusiasm, but the beggar's cry for help was also an *Hosanna*. *Eleison* is

*Hosanna*—different as the words sound to us. Literally, *hosanna* means *help now*! It came to be used as a favourite acclaim of kings because it was felt that nothing could be so pleasing to a king as the recognition that he was able and willing to help—possessed limitless power and was well disposed towards his suppliant subjects. The fact that Jesus graciously responded to the beggar's litany, 'Son of David, have mercy on me,' proves how much he was pleased by it. It may be that God is better pleased with our *Kyrie eleison* than with our praise and thanksgiving.

We need not greatly wonder at Jesus' preparation for a solemn entrance into Jerusalem. Even if he had been there before, what a momentous event this was for him! For, if it was not the only time, it was the *last*. He was entering the city to die there—and (if only ironically) to be put to death as King. And if it had not been the last time, it would still have been for Jesus a solemn thing to enter the Holy City. His bitter saying (Lk $13^{33, 34}$) that it is impossible to conceive of a prophet perishing anywhere but in Jerusalem hides a tenderness which he expresses feelingly in the same breath: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not.' That does not suffice to prove that Jesus had often taught there, as the Fourth Gospel represents, but it shows that in far away Galilee his thoughts had often turned to the Holy City, which was also the only symbol of unity his nation possessed—dearer than Capernaum or Nazareth and greater than all the cities of the earth.

Although Jesus was to return to Bethany with the Twelve to pass the night, it was natural they should wish to see the Holy City, the object of their long pilgrimage, before night fell. Wellhausen, who judges that they would be more likely to stop at Bethany and not enter Jerusalem till the following morning, probably never made a pilgrimage and does not understand its spirit. The spirit of pilgrimage is not understood by those who suppose that Jesus must have found quarters in a *house* for himself and his Apostles. The only clear indication of the way he passed his nights is the description of the last night in the garden of Gethsemane.

Presumably that was his customary place for passing the night, for Judas knew where to find him. But if we had no such indication, we should be justified in supposing that he and his disciples would prefer to pass their nights out of doors, even if quarters in a house were available. It might be cold at that season, but they could make a fire. That is the fun of a pilgrimage, the perennial appeal it makes to men who need a change from the humdrum conditions of their ordinary life. Pilgrims are always welcomed by the villages because they buy food, and they are free to sleep in the streets, or in the adjoining fields and orchards.

But before preparing their evening meal and arranging for the night, Jesus and his disciples wished to enjoy a cursory view of the city, and especially of the Temple. It seems that they freed themselves from their too numerous escort when they entered Jerusalem and were at liberty to 'look around at everything.' This phrase suggests that neither Jesus nor his Apostles had ever seen these sights before, or at least were not familiar with them. Remembering that the Apostles were not religious men, it does not seem strange that they had neglected the obligatory pilgrimage. But so far as Jesus is concerned, we are embarrassed by St. Luke's assertion ($2^{41, 42}$) that his parents had the habit of going up every year to the feast of the Passover and early began to take him with them. This is rendered in a measure plausible by the fact that his mother and his brothers seem on this occasion to have been in Jerusalem, making the pilgrimage on their own account.

## Section 9. ¶¶ 72–82

## IN THE TEMPLE

### Mk $11^{12}$—$12^{44}$

### ¶ 72. A Day of Action.

Mk $11^{12-19}$. **The next day when they were leaving Bethany he felt hungry, [13] and seeing at some distance a fig tree in full leaf, he went up to it to see if he could find any figs on it, and when he reached it he found nothing but leaves (for**

**it was not the season for figs). [14] And he addressed it in these words: 'May no one eat fruit from you henceforth for ever.' And his disciples heard it.**

**[15] Then they came to Jerusalem, and entering the Temple he proceeded to drive out of it those who were buying and selling in that holy place. He upset the money-changers' tables and the pigeon-sellers' stalls, [16] and would not allow anyone to carry anything through the Temple. [17] And he taught them and said, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it "a den of robbers."'**

**[18] And the high priests and the scribes heard of this, and they sought some way to destroy him. For they feared him. For all the multitude were astonished at his teaching.**

**[19] And when evening came he went to a place outside the city.**

The story of the fig tree, with the pragmatic sequel it has in St. Mark's Gospel (verses 20, 21) was so distasteful to St. Luke that he omitted it—unless we may suppose that he did not find it in the text which he read. His feeling was just, but if his critical judgment had been sharper, he might have allowed the first part to stand. We are obliged to admit that the sequel was at an early date a part of St. Mark's Gospel, for St. Matthew found it there, and in order to unite it with the first part of the story (and so eliminate an interruption of the principal narrative) he had to make the fig tree 'immediately wither away' (Mt $21^{19, 20}$). We cannot believe that Jesus, who had evidently determined to work no miracle at Jerusalem, performed only a maleficent one. But the first part of the story, if it stood alone, would hardly imply a miracle. In fact, it was very evidently a parable; and though the Evangelist did not so understand it, he furnishes us with sufficient evidence to prove it. He remarks, parenthetically, that 'it was not the season for figs.' That is notorious: figs are never ripe in that climate at Easter. At that season the fig 'branch has already grown tender and puts forth its leaves,' as Jesus justly remarked in another 'parable of the fig tree' ($13^{28}$). It is the last tree to become green, and men seeing it in full leaf know

that the spring is passed and summer is near. Jesus, knowing that, had no reason to be indignant because one individual fig tree did not bear fruit out of season. I conjecture that Jesus' hunger was invented by the Evangelist to account for his anger against the tree—though hunger early in the morning would not seem absurd among people who eat nothing until noon. We are told that the disciples 'heard' what Jesus said to the fig tree. We may wonder if they understood.

Regarded as a parable, this incident does not interrupt the narrative, but prepares us for what Jesus was about to do in the Temple. It was a parable in act rather than in words—of a sort very familiar in the Prophets. Nothing but leaves! That was like Jerusalem—like Israel with all its religious practices. No fruit! It stands condemned, and Jesus, addressing the tree, pronounces its condemnation: 'May no one eat fruit from you henceforth forever.' There was no need to invent the story that this tree was found withered the next day. Israel might go on bearing leaves for ever, but for ever it would bear no fruit. Several times in the long course of its history Israel seemed to be on the point of becoming the religious teacher of the nations—and then shrank back within itself. Even in Jesus' day it exercised an extraordinary fascination over sober-minded Gentiles, many of whom would gladly have become Jews but for the petty exactions of the ritual law. But all such influence was about to end. By the rejection of Jesus and the consequent strife with Christianity, Judaism was hopelessly narrowed, and lost even the will to exert a religious influence upon the world. The condemnation which Jesus pronounced in the parable of the fig tree was far more devastating than anything he did or said in the Temple, and it was punctually fulfilled.

With all the forms of religious expression Jesus had encountered in Galilee he had showed himself in opposition. Many of them he had denounced with bitter scorn, and his attitude towards the religion of the Synagogue had brought him into deadly strife with the scribes and Pharisees. But the religion of the Synagogue was what we would call a 'spiritual' religion compared with the religion of the Temple.

It was so like our old-fashioned Protestantism that we wonder often why Jesus found so much to complain of. The Reformed Churches in particular liked to believe that the Church derived its form of worship, and also its form of organization, from the Jewish synagogue. How many learned books they wrote to prove it! and how sincerely they expressed their flattery by imitation! In fact, hardly any of our Protestant denominations except the Society of Friends have forms of common worship so free and 'spiritual' as that which characterized the Synagogue. *There* only inspired Psalms were sung, nothing but inspired Scripture read, and any competent person was welcomed as a preacher. And with these religious people piety did not begin and end with the threshold of the synagogue. The divine Law regulated all their behaviour, and with special emphasis prescribed the Sabbath rest and the payment of Church tithes. As though the yoke of the Law was not enough of a burden, these people practised with zeal the spiritual exercises of almsgiving, fasting and prayer. One might think that Jesus would have liked all that, but instead he seems to have been exasperated by so much religion. Like Luther, he was inclined to shout at them, *pecca fortiter!* Live dangerously!—only repent! Before he left Galilee Jesus had ceased to be a synagogue Jew. His disciples, from the first, were recruited chiefly from the irreligious classes. But he still had the Scriptures and fed upon them. He had meat to eat of which his opponents did not know. Especially the Prophets and the Psalms —but also the Books of Moses, in which he discovered wonderful things in unexpected places. In Leviticus, for example, he discovered the Second Commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;' in Genesis, the ideal of marriage; and in Exodus, the justification of his belief in the resurrection of the dead. Even the prescriptions about the sacrificial cult of Israel can be read with edification, if one will symbolically attach to them a lofty religious significance. We may remember that the Calvinistic Churches, having no liturgical cult of their own, and no vestige left of the Christian Year, are (or were) inclined to revel in the Jewish feasts and to find a solace in the Temple

ritual. The Galileans and all the Jews of the dispersion were much in the same position. The Law, by prohibiting sacrifice anywhere but in Jerusalem, had undesignedly brought about the suppression of the ancient cult in favour of a sort of worship which was not so remote from the prophetic ideal. The great majority of the Jews were acquainted with animal sacrifice only by reading about it in the Bible, or by witnessing the rites of their pagan neighbours. On their occasional pilgrimages to Jerusalem the Temple ritual must have filled them with wonder.

In Jerusalem the ancient customs of sacrifice were far from being obsolete, for the ruling caste—priests and high priests and Sadducees—relied upon sacrifices and the Temple tribute for their support. Both of these sources of income Jesus would have stopped. Reading about sacrifice is a very different thing from seeing it. To our refined sensibility the common shambles are not a pleasant sight, and the Temple at Jerusalem must have been far worse. No hecatombs were any longer offered there, and many persons seem to have taken advantage of a provision meant for the poor (Lev. $12^{8}$; Lk $2^{24}$) and offered, instead of a lamb, two pigeons. Yet the massacre of beasts, especially when pilgrims were numerous, must have been horrible to see—the terror in the bullock's eye, the piteous bleating of the lambs—and then the blood, smearing the floor and staining the white garments of the priests. In addition to that there was the vulgar traffic, the bargaining and cheating. Many a pilgrim coming from Galilee or from the dispersion must have witnessed these things with amazement and disgust, but only Jesus felt free to protest. For him, when he first saw it on the evening of his arrival at Jerusalem, the Temple worship was ' dated.' He recognized it as pre-Prophetic. It was *that* and much more. It was worship of the earliest barbarian type and originally differed in no respect from other heathen cults but in the fact that only one God was worshipped and no image of him was carved. Against this Jesus appeals to the Prophetic ideal, ' My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations ' (Isa. $56^{7}$). Was it his ambition to change the Temple into a synagogue —as a Puritan might like to use a cathedral for a meeting-

house? No, he wanted it to be a house of prayer—not of prayers. And though he was no longer a synagogue Jew, he was not a separatist, had no taste for conventicles: he wanted it to be 'a house of prayer *for all nations*.' You think it improbable that he laid stress on those words? Then you must suppose that he read that chapter of Isaiah without sympathy or understanding. We have seen already how his horizon widened as he approached the Cross. This only confirms our notion that the word 'many' was wide enough to include 'all nations.'

Jesus' rebuke of the fig tree proves that when he left Bethany that morning he was resolved to make this demonstration in the Temple. It was only a demonstration, the sort of symbolical gesture which was characteristic of the prophets of Israel. We may observe that at Jerusalem Jesus hardly spoke any more in parables, he *acted* them, supplying sometimes barely a word of interpretation. Such was his condemnation of the fig tree, his cleansing of the Temple, his interpretation of the anointing at Bethany and of the broken bread at the Last Supper. A long discourse which is here called a 'parable' ($12^{1-12}$) is really an allegory, entirely in the style of Isaiah. In Jerusalem Jesus bore no resemblance to a rabbi, he was altogether the prophet. In this character he pronounced the great eschatological prediction. The questions raised in the Temple were (except in one case) not of his choosing. His replies, at all events, were direct, without parable or mystery. These traits distinguish Jesus' sayings in Jerusalem from all others.

Only a demonstration—but how thorough! Everything that the Temple was built for he prohibited! We must make clear to ourselves that the buying and selling (of pigeons, *etc.*) which went on in the Temple was not foreign to its purpose. Pilgrims could not bring the sacrificial animals with them, and had to buy them there. The money-changers were no less in place. Besides voluntary offerings to the Temple, the half-shekel (Mt $17^{14-27}$) was due as a poll tax, and because the coins of the Gentiles bore *images* of emperors or false deities they had to be exchanged for Jewish currency before they were put in the Temple treasury. Jesus would have cut off all the income of the

priesthood—that is, of the Jewish State, such as it was. 'He would not allow any one to carry anything through the Temple.' He would put an end to all that business totally.

His act was only a symbolical demonstration. After it was over the business of the Temple went on as usual. But Jesus had still another word to say. He prophesied the destruction of a temple which could not be cleansed. We have report of this prophecy as made to the disciples (13[2]); but he must have made it more openly, for this was the only crime of which witnesses could be found to accuse him (14[58]). The Romans were not slow in fulfilling his prediction.

Only a demonstration. But how bold a one! It would not have been possible for Jesus to carry through such a demonstration before he had won the reputation of a prophet and was supported by an enthusiastic crowd of Galilean pilgrims. Nothing in the Fourth Gospel is more manifestly unhistorical than the placing of this act at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. If this were the beginning, it must also have been the end; for this act was outrageously provocative, it was meant clearly enough to hasten the end Jesus was moving towards, and the authorities could not afford to delay vigorous action to bring about his destruction. They were justly afraid of him, for he had the sympathy of the pilgrims. He had indicated a reform which *their* hearts approved of—though it would mean no more sacrifices, and might mean no more pilgrims.

St. Mark's account seems to imply that Jesus, in defiance of the authorities, held possession of the Temple all that day. This may well have led to scenes of violence which would justify the Roman authority in treating Jesus as a dangerous man. The Evangelists would naturally be shy of reporting scenes of tumult which might make Jesus seem to be a revolutionary like Barabbas. Only 'when evening came' did he go out of the city to his established bivouac. Mark has told us already that this was at Bethany, and it was not necessary for him to mention that name again till he has to tell of the supper in the house of Simon the leper (14[3]). Only when we come to the story of the last night are we told that the spot where he was accustomed to sleep was called

Gethsemane (14[32])—a name never to be forgotten. St. John (18[1]) calls it an ' orchard.'

Wellhausen is of the opinion that Mark does not succeed in making it plausible that all of Jesus' activity in Jerusalem was comprised in ' an uncertain scheme of six days.' In fact, I can make only four days out of it, and that seems to me enough. I cannot think that one day was too short a time for Jesus to utter all the discourses which are reported, for I reflect that as a preacher I have often said as much in half an hour. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe that Mark, according to his manner, has crowded into one day all of Jesus' teaching which more likely was distributed over two or three. That would better agree with Jesus' own word, ' I was daily with you in the Temple teaching ' (14[49]). It is thus that St. Mark combines in one section the conflicts in Galilee (2[1, 3]3[35]), relates as occurring in one day a great number of miracles (1[21–34]), and puts all the parables in another day (4[1–34]).

Counting backwards (*cp.* p. 353), we have in Friday (15[1–47]) a certain date for Jesus' trial and crucifixion. For Thursday (14[12–72]) St. Mark reports no activity on Jesus' part. It would seem as if he had remained at Bethany when he sent his disciples to prepare the Passover, and come to Jerusalem in the evening when it was time for the supper. But it may be that Mark was compelled to give us a false impression by the fact that he had lumped in one day *all* the teaching. If Jesus taught ' daily ' in the Temple, Thursday, one would think, must have been as favourable a day as any ; and it is not easy to believe that on the day Jesus held possession of the Temple he spoke no word of instruction but the one quotation from Isaiah. Wednesday (11[20]–14[11]), according to St. Mark's account, was a very full day, for after the controversies in the Temple he uttered a long prediction to his disciples, and in the evening he dined at Bethany. Tuesday (11[12–19]) was occupied with the cleansing of the Temple. Monday (11[11]) evening he had arrived from Jericho, having reached that town on a Sunday. St. Mark's reckoning of four days is confirmed by the fact that there is no hint of a Sabbath spent in Jerusalem. Jesus certainly did not travel to Jerusalem on a Sabbath,

or to Jericho, and he spent only one night in that town. Therefore, it was a day's march short of Jericho that he rested for the Sabbath, and from that day to the great Sabbath when he rested in the tomb there elapsed only one week.

About the length of time Jesus spent in Jerusalem we have outside of Mark no reliable information, except a hint given in John $7^{53}$–$8^{2}$. Matthew and Luke are entirely dependent upon Mark at this point, and cannot be used to supplement or correct him. But these three verses, and the story which follows of the woman taken in adultery, are evidently culled from an independent source (the Gospel according to the Hebrews, men opine), and having been written by a scribe on the margin of a copy of St. John's Gospel, ultimately crept into the text—through the carelessness of another scribe. This passage, which is like an erratic boulder in the midst of St. John's Gospel, would perfectly fit into St. Mark's account. The first verse of this passage (' And every one of them went home ') would be a fitting conclusion to the account of the stormy demonstration in the Temple. St. Mark's account ($11^{19}$) is confirmed by the statement that ' Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.' And what follows (' But early the next morning he returned to the Temple, and the people all came to him, and he sat down and taught them ') is a much better introduction to the day of teaching in the Temple than that which Mark's Gospel gives us ($11^{20-26}$). For (as we shall see) St. Mark's account is spoiled here by the interpolation of the miracle of the withered fig tree and the possibly authentic sayings about faith which are inappropriately connected with it. I am inclined to think that St. Mark was not responsible for this interpolation, though it must have been a very early one, since the author of St. Matthew's Gospel found it there. Possibly Luke did not. And I make the conjecture (the most hazardous I have ventured to make) that originally the story of the adulteress occupied this place, and that the matter we now find there was put in to fill the gap caused by its omission.

We learn at all events from this passage that Jesus ' sat ' as he taught in the Temple—that is, he assumed the position of an authoritative teacher. So seated, Pharisees, Herodians,

Sadducees, and scribes ' came ' to him, and in propounding their questions they rendered at least ironical homage to his authority. This indication is especially pertinent to the story which it introduces. For not only does it explain that in stooping down to write on the ground Jesus had not far to stoop, but it shows that the woman was brought to him as one who assumed to be a master of the Law. Of course with the expectation of confounding him ; for though the law of Moses clearly required that such a woman should be stoned, the Roman regulations no less clearly prohibited the Jews from stoning her (Jn $18^{31}$). No one will say that Jesus was merely adroit in avoiding this trap. The word he there uttered was one of the profoundest. *That* word at least no rabbi ever uttered before him—or after. ' Let the one among you who is without sin throw the first stone at her '—one who has never committed adultery ' in his heart ' (Mt $5^{27}$). Jesus ' stooped down ' (we may surmise) rather than see the shamefaced woman and the cruel eyes of the men who had dragged her into public shame only for the sake of embarrassing him. No story of St. Mark's is more vivid ; and none, we may say, bears on the face of it more clearly the marks of genuineness.

With regard to the whole question of the credibility of the Gospels, this passage is of singular importance. We have been accustomed to regard it as true because we found it in St. John's Gospel. But when we learn that it was properly no part of that Gospel, that it belonged to no Gospel which was canonically accredited by the Church, that, on the contrary, it was excluded from the evangelical tradition because it seemed a danger to morals, and that it can lay no more claim to ' inspiration ' than any other scrap of early tradition, it seems no whit less credible to us, no whit less true. We need such an example as this to make clear to ourselves that, however we may value canonicity, whatever we may think of inspiration, we must in the last resort rely upon such internal evidence as this when we judge of the credibility of the Gospels. If they (or some parts of them) do not accredit themselves to you by such evidence, you will have to rest your faith in the Gospels upon something less secure.

Whether this story originally belonged to St. Mark's Gospel or not, it is proper to consider it here, because it evidently belongs to this time, and probably represents the first question which was brought before Jesus as he sat as a teacher in the Temple. We can well understand why it was omitted, but there is no other word of Jesus we could so ill afford to lose out of the story of these last days. For it displays him in his old rôle as the forgiver of sins ($2^{5-11}$; see p. 99), and makes it plausible that this rôle which had alienated from him the religious and moral men of Galilee contributed to bring about his destruction in Jerusalem. The secular authorities of the Jewish nation—the priestly caste of irreligious ritualists—were prompted by his behaviour in the Temple to plot his destruction; but it is not likely they could have accomplished their design, if the Pharisees (the party of morals and religion) had not been outraged by his criticism of the synagogue and his threat of undermining all morality by the way he had of forgiving sins. By that questionable action he seemed to defile the Temple he was cleansing.

You may say, perhaps, that Jesus did not expressly *forgive* this woman taken in the very act of adultery. He said only, 'Neither do I condemn thee.' For my part, I ask no more than to hear that most worthy Judge eternal say such words as that to me—not now but *then*, when I shall have no opportunity of sinning any more, even 'in heart.'

We have had occasion to note that Jesus was sometimes more thoroughgoing in his theory than in his practice (p. 150). Most characteristic, however, is the fact that of his disciples he *required* much more than he expected. He did not spare them the hardest injunctions, he set before them the highest ideals, but he put up with mediocre attainments, and extended forgiveness to such as fell short even of common standards of respectability. This blessed inconsistency of Jesus is nowhere more strikingly shown than in his treatment of this adulterous woman. Only a few days before this he had pronounced that remarriage after divorce was adultery ($10^{11, 12}$). We argue consistently then that a man or woman so remarried is excluded from

the Church and from the Kingdom of God. But here is a crude and flagrant act of adultery, and Jesus forgives. Would we not be more like him if we were less consistent? Might we not theoretically accept his theory, and practically follow his practice?

¶ 73. The Withered Fig Tree.

Mk 11[20–25]. **And as they passed by early in the morning they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. [21] And Peter remembered and said to him, 'Look, Rabbi, the fig tree which you cursed is withered.' [22] And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. [23] *Amen* I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Get up and throw yourself into the sea," and has no doubt in his mind, but has faith that what he says will happen, it will be as he says. [24] Therefore, I say to you, whatever you pray for and ask, believe that you have received it, and you will have it. [25] And when you stand up to pray, if you have anything against anybody, forgive him, in order that your Father in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.'**

We have just now been considering a non-canonical passage which inspires confidence, and here we encountered a canonical one which does not. The prejudices (p. 425f) with which we approach this passage are confirmed when we come to study it in detail. We are a little bit surprised at seeing the withered fig tree dragged in. That the 'impulsive' Peter should be the first to remark upon it and 'remember' seems plausible, but it is not so plausible that he should address Jesus as 'Rabbi,' now that he and all the Apostles knew so well what he was. At least it is strange that the Evangelist should stress that title by giving it in Hebrew. But what we chiefly remark upon is that the exhortations to faith which follow are incongruously hung upon the withered branches of this tree. 'Have faith in God.' Yes, it was like Jesus to say that, but a withered fig tree was not a very apt instance for confirming the disciples' faith in God's beneficent and illimitable power. In Galilee Jesus spoke of faith simply in relation to God; but I should think that here in Jerusalem Jesus would

have mixed some reference to faith in *him*, the Apostles having learned to know him as the Christ. A phrase in the Fourth Gospel (Jn $14^{1}$) seems to me to interpret the situation justly: 'Have faith in God—have faith also in me.'

In fact, all of these sayings transport us back to Galilee. It was on the shore of the sea of Galilee Jesus could appropriately utter the prodigious saying, 'Whoever says to this mountain, "Get up and throw yourself into the sea . . ." it will be as he says.' In exaggerated form, this is the same saying that Matthew reports ($17^{20}$; *cp.* 1 Cor. $13^{2}$). And in what is said here and in the next sentence about 'not doubting,' about belief absolute, we have a travesty of faith, an example of degeneration into fanatical credulity, or at least of that stubborn will-to-believe which is represented by the White Queen's boast that she can shut her eyes and believe fifty impossible things in a minute.

The last admonition in this paragraph has as little to do with faith as it has with the fig tree. It not only transports us to Galilee but to a tradition foreign to St. Mark. 'Your Father in heaven,' is not his phrase, and the rest of the sentence is a reminiscence of the Lord's Prayer and the sentence which follows it in St. Matthew's Gospel (Mt $6^{14}$). Verse 26 was added by a scribe—which shows how easily such a list of sayings could be put together out of scraps from the evangelical tradition.

If we had approached this paragraph without prejudice, we could not fail to be disquieted by it, and the assertion that Jn $7^{53ff.}$ provides a better introduction to the day of teaching in the Temple may now appear to be justified. This day of teaching in the Temple is reported fully, in ten paragraphs, whereas the day of action is described with prudent brevity in one. Actions so extraordinary and so violent must have led to interesting scenes, but in a public document it would not do to depict Christianity as a possible menace to civil States. A century later the Christian Apologists exerted themselves to prove that Christianity was a harmless thing, but the Roman emperors shrewdly detected in it a danger which tended to subvert the State.

¶ 74. 'By what Authority?'

Mk 11[27–33]. **And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking about in the Temple, the high priests and scribes and elders came up to him [28] and demanded, 'By what authority are you doing these things? or who gave you that authority to do such things?' [29] But Jesus said to them, 'I shall ask you a question, and if you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I do such things. [30] What about John's baptism? Was it from heaven or from men? Answer me that.' [31] And they discussed with one another, 'What shall we say? If we say, "From heaven," he will ask, "Why then did you not believe in him?" [32] Yet can we say, "From men"?' They feared the crowd, for all held that John was really a prophet. [33] And the reply they made to Jesus was, 'We do not know.' And Jesus replied to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do such things.'**

Here in turn we have a canonical passage which inspires as much confidence as the uncanonical story we lately were considering. There can be no doubt about the authenticity of this tradition. But we may doubt if it properly belongs to the day when Jesus formally sat and taught in the Temple. Here he is not sitting but 'walking about'—superintending his reform of the Temple, we may suspect, on the first day of his activity in Jerusalem. That day could hardly have passed without some challenge of his authority; and here, appropriately, we find all the authorities approaching him in a body—'high priests and scribes and elders'—to demand what authority he has to set up against theirs. Appropriately, they ask him, not by what authority he presumes to teach, but 'by what authority are you *doing* these things.' Without doubt, it is for his reforming activity in the Temple he is challenged, and this protest would naturally be made by the authorities while Jesus was in the midst of his activities, rather than the day after. They say 'these' things, which you '*are doing*.' Assuming that Mark is right in putting this challenge the day after, all of our versions find themselves compelled to deal disingenuously with this present tense.

But not much hangs upon our conjecture that Mark has

misplaced this incident for the sake of having all the teaching on one day—and still reports the colloquy so faithfully that it betrays to us the truth. This passage is of immense importance wherever we put it.

We have been accustomed to think that Jesus' reply was merely an adroit evasion. The best we could say for it was that he was hinting at a kind of authority which was not delegated by men or transmitted (as the high priests and scribes assumed all authority must be) and which could present no formal credentials. Such was the prophetic authority, and the scribes, as the lawyers of the Jewish nation, could not ignore it as a possible category. That is all right so far as it goes. 'From heaven or from men?' is a question which aptly discriminates between prophetic authority and all other sorts, and it was because the people all held John to be a prophet that the high priests were afraid to say, 'from men.' But we have learned in what singular estimation Jesus held John the Baptist. He was 'more than a prophet,' he was 'Elijah, the Coming One' (Mt 11[9-14]). The authority by which he instituted his baptism and attempted a reform of Judaism was the authority of the Forerunner of the Messiah. But if the high priests and scribes and elders did not recognize *that*, and were unwilling to credit it, it would have been vain for Jesus to assert that in reforming the Temple he was acting with the authority of the *Messiah*. The high priests and scribes had probably heard that the crowd suspected Jesus of being the Forerunner, and, if so, their question was meant to elicit from Jesus a clear reply on that score. How useless, then, it would have been for him to reply that he was the Messiah. Jesus' secret still remained a secret because it could receive no credence.

Incidentally, this passage shows us how thoroughly the Jewish authorities were terrorized by Jesus and the crowd which he controlled. In the story of the reform of the Temple this is not made clear, and, strangely enough, 'the crowd' is not mentioned, though we can easily imagine that Jesus could not have held possession of the Temple for a day, or even for an hour, without having the crowd at his back. On that day the high priests did not regain

possession of their Temple till all the people had gone to their homes (Jn $7^{53}$). On the following day his supporters gathered about him again (Jn $8^{1}$), so that the rulers, being afraid to resort to violence, could only approach him with insidious questions, seeming to concede the authority which he assumed, but hoping to discredit him by his answers.

¶ 75. An Allegory.

Mk $12^{1-12}$. **And he began to speak to them in parables. Once upon a time a man planted a vineyard and fenced it in and hewed out a wine-vat and built a watch tower, and let it out to tenants and went to another country.** [2] **And in due time he sent a servant to the tenants in order that he might receive from the tenants a share of the fruits of the vineyard.** [3] **And they took him in and beat him and sent him empty handed away.** [4] **And again he sent to them another servant, and him they knocked on the head and insulted.** [5] **He sent another, and him they killed,—and so with many more, some they beat and some they killed.** [6] **He still had one left to send, a beloved son. He sent him to them last, thinking, 'They will respect my son.'** [7] **But these tenants said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'** [8] **So they took him and killed him and threw his body outside the vineyard.** [9] **What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.** [10] **Did you never read this passage of Scripture:**

> ***'The stone which the builders rejected***
> ***Has become the cornerstone;***
> [11] ***This is the Lord's doing,***
> ***And it is marvellous in our eyes'?***

[12] **And they tried to lay hold of him, but they feared the crowd. For they knew that he applied this parable to them. And they left him and went away.**

The word 'parable' as the Evangelists use it (pp. 128ff) was broad enough to cover not only the popular illustrations Jesus commonly used in Galilee, but also an allegory such as this which follows. In the first instance the word is

used in the plural, with reference evidently to the several similitudes contained in the one allegory. The man who plants the vineyard is God, the tenants are the rulers of Israel, the servants are God's prophets, and the beloved son evidently meant more than a prophet. The hearers might well wonder about that. It seemed too high a similitude for John the Baptist. It would be appropriate to the Messiah—only it was inconceivable that the Messiah could be 'killed.' As they were not in possession of Jesus' secret, the hearers could not imagine that he was referring to himself. There is, in fact, no hint of that. Though the application, of course, seems obvious to us, it was not apprehended by the hearers, and that proves how far they were from suspecting that Jesus conceived himself to be the Messiah. In the last verse of this paragraph the word parable is used in the singular ('this parable') with reference to the allegory as a whole.

The fact that Jesus used at the beginning (verse 1) familiar phrases from Isaiah 5 made it plain at once that he was uttering an allegory and facilitated the interpretation of it. 'They' understood enough to know that the allegory was meant to apply to them. Who were 'they'? 'The crowd' (verse 12) are still with Jesus, but it was not to them the allegory applied, and evidently he had other hearers. The 'they' of verse 12 are the same persons of importance we encountered in the preceding paragraph, 'the high priests and scribes and elders.' Here we become aware that they were not the rulers of the Temple only but of the whole nation, representatives of the Sanhedrin. The authority which *they* boasted Jesus disparages by the word 'tenants,' contrasting it with the authority of God's servants (the prophets) and with the authority of a son —which (if they could have understood it) was the very authority they were now rebelling against. It was not he that was a rebel, but they. And Israel had always been rebellious. The catalogue of God's servants who were beaten or killed is prolonged for the effect of condemning not only the rulers of to-day who had left John the Baptist to his fate, but Israel in its whole long history. It was not only the Jerusalem of Jesus' day that 'kills the prophets'

(Mt $23^{37}$). And the condemnation is as definitive as that which Jesus pronounced parabolically, addressing the fig tree: 'Let no man eat fruit of you henceforth forever.' For the vineyard is to be taken from 'them' and given to others (verse 9). Though all the flock of Israel (the crowd that sided with Jesus, for example) is not condemned so clearly as the shepherds, we cannot suppose that 'to others' means simply to other *rulers*. It must mean that the great privileges Israel had enjoyed would be given to other people. And though many hesitate to attribute such a thought to Jesus, we who have long been approaching this culminating moment of Jesus' life cannot think it strange. And if the original tenants of the vineyard are to be 'destroyed,' who could possess it but 'others'?

The citation from Ps. $118^{22, 23}$ (verses 10 and 11) goes further than the conclusion of the allegory and 'hangs over'—as Wellhausen and Jülicher affirm. But also the 'beloved son' hangs over. Both went further than the hearers could clearly go with their interpretative application. But why shouldn't they? Jesus, as we have often had occasion to observe, found satisfaction in self-expression. This citation was an apt expression, at once of his sense that he was 'rejected,' and of his confidence that he would be recognized later as 'the corner-stone.' In fact, both of these things are expressed in the allegory. There Jesus presumes to speak of himself as 'a beloved son' ('an only-begotten son' comes to the same thing), and he regards himself as already 'killed.' That cannot surprise *us* who know what 'Son of Man' means and have heard Jesus' clear predictions of his death.

An invective could not have been more scathing than this allegory. It was intentionally provocative—as much so as the cleansing of the Temple—and we cannot wonder that it prompted the authorities to hasten the purpose they had already formed of putting him to death. But still they did not dare to arrest him while he had the support of the crowd.

The most terrible count in his indictment they did not yet apprehend—that he was denouncing them beforehand as the murderers of the Messiah.

¶ 76. Is it Lawful to Pay Tribute?

Mk 12[13–17]. **And they sent some of the Pharisees and the Herodians to him for the purpose of catching him with a question. [14] And they when they came put a question to him with guile, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you tell the truth regardless of consequences, you do not court human favour, but teach the way of God honestly. Is it right to pay the poll tax to the emperor or not? Should we pay it, or should we not pay it?' [15] But he perceived their deception and said to them, 'Why do you tempt me? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.' [16] They brought one, and he said to them, 'Whose is this image and the inscription?' 'The emperor's,' they said. [17] And Jesus gave them his answer in these words: 'What is the emperor's give to the emperor, and what is God's give to God.' And they were astonished at him.**

The principal personages had left the Temple, feeling that their dignity could only be compromised by remaining there while Jesus held the floor. But they sent emissaries who were to put to him a dangerous question, with the hope of eliciting an answer which would either compromise him in the eyes of the Roman authorities or else discredit him with the crowd. Pharisees and Herodians—that is the ominous partnership which was already formed in Galilee (3[6]). The Jewish nationalists, who also were the party of religion and morality, united for the destruction of Jesus with their opposites, the people who, on profitable terms, had become reconciled to the Roman government and the various members of the Herodian family who administered it. They represented *both* sides of the question which they unitedly put to Jesus.

The laudatory terms of their address were, in fact, very appropriate to Jesus. They may well have felt so themselves, for he had recently showed himself outspoken and fearless. Nevertheless, this was said with guile, in order to instigate him to give a fearless reply to this dangerous question, and Jesus perceived that this was a part of their 'deception' (hypocrisy).

The question they put was not a scholastic one, but an issue of immediate actuality. The Roman Government

—that is, the secular law under which the Jews lived—exacted a poll tax from all the inhabitants of Palestine. That was doubtless vexatious, but how could one question if it were 'lawful'? The fact is, that this was one of the points where the Roman law was thought to conflict with the Jewish—that is, with the divine law. I remember that not long ago the British Government unexpectedly found itself at war with an African tribe because it had sought to make taxation equitable by levying it in proportion to the number of cattle a native possessed—a poll tax on cattle. Unfortunately the administration ignored one of the peculiar notions of that tribe, which regarded a tax as equivalent to rent, and consequently believed that by submitting to it they would be giving legal consent to the confiscation of all their valuable property. The Jewish notion also was peculiar, being involved in their conception of religion—'the way of God.' We have already seen (p. 429) that all Jews were required to pay a Jewish poll tax. It was paid in Jewish coinage into the Temple treasury as a token that it was paid to God. To pay a poll tax to the emperor was esteemed to be a confession that they were *his* people and not God's. The antithesis, Caesar *or* God, which appears in Jesus' answer, was already in the mind of the questioners. Hence the form of the question, 'Is it right (lawful) to pay the poll tax to the emperor? Should we pay it, or should we not pay it?'

Here again it is commonly supposed that Jesus' reply was an adroit evasion. It hardly seems likely, however, that in the same moment when he was boldly resisting and denouncing the Jewish *authorities* he was afraid of wounding the susceptibilities of the Jewish crowd. We might rather think that he would be cautious about offending the Roman authority, for the same reason that he had avoided Herod in Galilee. The direct intervention of Rome would upset his programme. For if it was inappropriate that a prophet should perish anywhere but in Jerusalem, it was no less so that he should perish there without the connivance of the Jews.

But in reality we need not raise such questions; for though Jesus did not reply bluntly with a Yes or a No, his

answer was nevertheless a perfectly definite one. And though he decided in favour of the Roman claim, we have no reason to suspect that he was not expressing his sincere conviction. It appears that Jesus was by no means enthusiastic about the *Jewish* poll tax—if we can accept that much of the queer story about the *stater* (Mt 17[24-26]). Nevertheless he paid it. He was not inclined to be a rebel or protester about things which he regarded as supremely indifferent. Money was one of these things, and it was with money a tax had to be paid. He showed his indifference when he angrily declined the invitation to advise two brothers about the division of their inheritance. He expressed more than indifference for money when he called it Mammon (Lk 12[13]), conceiving it, like some gross deity of the idolaters, far more antithetical to God than even Caesar was (Mt 6[24]).

Jesus was consistent in this attitude. He possessed no money and had to ask that a coin be showed to him. He could count upon the Pharisees to have it—who in spite of their religiousness were said to be 'lovers of money,' and in spite of their nationalism would not despise coins of Roman currency. He asked appropriately for a *denarius*—a silver coin about the size of a shilling. It was in silver this tax had to be paid, and silver money existed only in Roman coinage. The denarius was not a coin of sufficient value, we would think, to justify the Jews' loud protest. But it was for thirty such coins Jesus was betrayed (Mt 26[15]). If the coin handed to him was of recent date, it bore the image of the reigning emperor with the inscription of his name: TIBERIUS CLAUDIUS NERO CAESAR. Ominous names! This was Mammon undisguised. It clearly belonged to the emperor. Give it to him, then. No religious scruples could properly oppose submission to the tax.

So far as concerns the practical issue which was submitted to Jesus, this was a clear and decisive answer. But Jesus did not stop with that. Characteristically he added something more, which 'hangs over.' He remarks that if there are things which belong to Caesar (indifferent things), there are also things (of supreme importance) which belong to God. Then give them to him!

Jesus affirmed in effect that religious scruples do not properly apply to this tax. And yet it is probable that the coin which was handed to him (like some that have been preserved to us from the reign of Tiberius), in addition to the name of the emperor, bore an inscription which implied his divinity: DIVI AUGUSTI FILIUS, son of the divine Augustus. That meant little less than Son of God! It was the entering wedge of the emperor cult which was no less intolerable to Christians than to Jews. It is a plausible guess that *Caesar God* is the answer to the riddle proposed in Rev. $13^{18}$—the name of the beast which corresponds to the number 616. The common title for emperor in Greek (*Sebastos*=Augustus) must have been understood as a pretension to religious honours. All this contributes to explain why the Jews regarded the tribute as a religious question, and why Jesus here speaks of the emperor as the antithesis of God. For the sake of this antithesis many of the disciples of Jesus in a later age were to sacrifice their lives. Upon *their* Son of God they heaped all the honorific titles claimed for the emperor (Deissmann). We discover a profound pathos in the acclaim which concludes the *Gloria in Excelsis* when we apprehend that this was in effect the confession which condemned many a Christian to death. 'Thou *only* art holy, thou *only* art the Lord, thou *only*, O Christ, art most high in the glory of God the Father.' His Name was acclaimed by the Church as 'above every name.' But it appears that Jesus himself was not so jealous of his own prerogative—when it was only a question of names and of money and of temporal rule. There in his hand lay the denarius. The image and the inscription showed clearly that it was *not* God's. Since it evidently belonged to the emperor—the antigod—it was proper to give it to him. That (if you can receive it) was the solution of early Christianity for every problem involved in the relation of Church and State. The State is evil, but man by his own fault has fallen into subjection to it, and therefore he must submit.*

Caesar and God! If in this fiercely disparaging antithesis we discover only complementary poles and an elegant example of equilibrium, we betray how much we have

* Franz Overbeck, *Studien zur Geschichte der alten Kirche*, 1875.

belittled God. In Jesus' mouth such a contrast could only serve to belittle Caesar. We use this sentence very absurdly to commend any of the situations of unstable equilibrium we happen to enjoy for a moment in the public conflict between Church and State, or in the private perplexity about discriminating the religious from the secular. If it were only with the *religious* and the secular we had to do, we might contrive to strike a balance—both of them being human categories. But when we throw *God* into the scale he tops it.

### ¶ 77. Are the Dead Raised?

Mk 12[18–27]. **Also the Sadducees—the party which affirms there is no resurrection—came up and put a question to him.** [19] **'Teacher,' they said, 'Moses prescribed to us that if a man's brother died leaving a wife but no child, his brother is to marry and raise up offspring for his brother.** [20] **Once there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died leaving no offspring,** [21] **and the second took her as his wife and died leaving no offspring, and the third likewise,—**[22] **and none of the seven left any offspring. Finally, the woman died too.** [23] **At the resurrection, when they all rise, whose wife shall she be? For all seven had her as their wife.'** [24] **Jesus said to them, 'Is not this the ground of your error, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?** [25] **For when people rise from the dead they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven.** [26] **But as to the fact that the dead are raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, "at the bush," how God spoke to him, saying, "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob"?** [27] **He is not a God of the dead, but God of the living! You therefore greatly err.'**

If St. Mark's report of this colloquy is not true, it is marvellously well invented. The Sadducees knew that Jesus was an eschatologist. That was notorious. Though he was no friend of the Pharisees, he shared with them their most characteristic doctrine—belief in the resurrection of the dead and in the Kingdom of God which lay beyond it. The Sadducees, for their part (Acts 23[8]), repudiated all such over-beliefs. They were sufficiently influenced by Greek

thoughts to play with the notion of the immortality of the soul, but they were arrogant in their repudiation of this modern Jewish hope, both because it was evident that it had no express warrant in the Holy Scriptures, and also because the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead as it was held by the Pharisees seemed to involve the grossest absurdities. So they presented to Jesus an unanswerable question.

The problem they proposed was so remote from actuality that it cannot even be called an academic question. It refers to an ancient tribal custom of Israel, which, though it was registered in the Law (Deut. $25^{5,6}$), had certainly not been observed for many centuries. They assumed, moreover, the most extravagant case, of seven brothers all having the same wife, none of them having children by her which might constitute a superior claim. At the resurrection they would be in great perplexity about who was to have her. But the more fantastically the question was conceived, the better it would serve as a *reductio ad absurdum*—and that is what it was meant for. With obsequious irony the Sadducees assume the truth of the doctrine which they would prove to be absurd. Christian scribes argue in much the same way, and just as superciliously, against the fundamental Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

But Jesus was not abashed. It is we Biblical critics who might feel abashed at his discovery of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead in the Pentateuch itself, and in a passage which really does reflect one of the most antique traditions of Israel. We have been proud of our acumen in establishing the fact that the genuine religion of Israel treasured no hope of immortal life. We do not prove it merely from such a sceptic as the Preacher (Eccl. $9^{3-6}$), but from the most profoundly religious utterances in the Old Testament (Ps. $6^{5}$, *cp.* $115^{17}$ ; Isa. $38^{18}$),

> For in death there is no remembrance of thee ;
> In sheol who shall give thee thanks ?

And yet we wonder if we have sounded the very depths of the Old Testament. Bred as we are in another tradition, a religion without immortality seems as paradoxical to us

as the atheistical religion of Gautama. Jesus discovers where we would least expect it an intimation of immortality, *implied* in the very nature of God, and almost *expressed* in this word of God to Moses. No rabbi, so far as we know, was able to discover this. And, knowing Jesus, we would be rash to assume that he offers us here a vain rabbinical subtilty.

Jesus finds fault with the Sadducees first of all for what they consider their *forte*: they err because they do not really know the Scriptures. In the second place, because they have no conception of the 'power of God.' Indeed, if we do not take into account the power of God, all eschatology is ridiculous.

He deals first with the impossible possibility. It is not necessary to conceive grossly of the resurrection of the dead. We cannot think it desirable that we should retain for ever 'the body of this death,' the need of marrying and being given in marriage, and this heart out of which such manifold *libido* proceeds ($7^{20-23}$). And we *cannot* think so meanly of the resurrection, if we have in mind the 'power of God,' which is able to 'fashion anew the body of our humiliation in conformity with the body of Christ's glory' (Phil. $3^{21}$). 'Glory' is not a category that was strange to Jesus: it was familiar as the equivalent of the Kingdom of God ($10^{37}$). And though this is something which eye hath not seen, neither ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to believe, nevertheless we have (if it be only in thought) an illuminating analogy, as familiar to us as to the Sadducees, and Jesus needed only to refer to it—'the angels in heaven.' He had only to utter that word, and the unanswerable question was shown to be absurd. 'Like the angels' is no less spiritual a conception of the resurrection than St. Paul's 'spiritual body' (1 Cor. $15^{44}$).

But, as usual, Jesus does not stop with the demonstration of his opponents' folly. As usual, he goes on to speak of God—and not alone of God's 'power.' His opponents had not said a word about God—as though God had nothing to do with the resurrection of the dead! What Jesus proceeds to say 'hangs over,' and yet it is the matter of chief importance.

The Sadducees had not formally denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, yet that was really the question at issue. And it was not proved by disposing of the opponents' objection.

With passionate earnestness Jesus affirms 'the fact that the dead are raised.' And no wonder, for on that dogma depended all his Gospel. No Kingdom of God, if there is no resurrection of the dead! Then he must say like St. Paul (1 Cor. $15^{13-19}$), My preaching has been in vain, my faith is vain, I am of all men most pitiable. Most pitiable indeed would he have been at that moment, if the Sadducees had succeeded in convincing him (then when it was too late to retreat) that he was giving up his life (all there is or ever will be of life) for an absurd delusion! Even if it were not too late to draw back and return to his trade at Nazareth, this present life could not seem worth saving to one who had once treasured such a delusion. And what of the 'many' he had hoped to save?

We can well understand that Jesus spoke with passionate conviction about 'the fact that the dead are raised.' But he was able also to give a reason for the faith that was in him. He had a reasoned as well as a passionate conviction. The resurrection of the dead was the assumption of all his preaching about the Kingdom of God, but except for this saying in reply to a provocation, we might suppose that he had never examined his assumption. For this is the only case where Jesus argues to prove the fact of the resurrection of the dead. It is evident that his argument was not impromptu: he had thought it out—primarily for his own comfort. 'Men do not palm off hollow nuts on themselves.' And this will seem no hollow nut, if we take the pains to examine it.

We must note that Jesus reaches his conclusion dialectically, by the exclusion of impossibilities. 'He is *not* a God of the dead.' He was successively the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob—that was when each was living in this body. But when God spoke to Moses, though the patriarchs had long since been buried, he proclaimed himself *their* God! Then they must be living! Really it is in the thought that God is somebody's God Jesus found a support

for his conviction. It has been said of Abraham that he was a 'friend of God.' Is God to be conceived as a sort of wandering Jew who outlives his friendships? What a *triste* conception! God is then a charnel-house of buried friendships! We exclude that as impossible: 'He is not a God of the dead, but God of the living.' Then if God is somebody's God, he is that man's God for ever. There are other passages of Scripture in which Jesus might have discovered this implication, but it is not strange that he preferred to cite the classical passage in which God disclosed not only his own name and nature but his relation to man (Ex. 3[6-14]).

But in the thought that God is somebody's God, in the thought that between God and man there is, or may be, a personal and reciprocal relationship, we may find a more positive proof of the impossible possibility. Without God as an assumption it is impossible to think of Eternal Life—if by 'eternal' we mean something that will last longer than this planet. God is the only environment stable enough to justify the word 'eternal.' Only as 'in God' can a man live for ever. The argument might be expressed in the terms of Fechner's philosophy—has indeed been persuasively expressed by him in *Leben nach dem Tode* and in *Tagesansicht*, and briefly in the poem (*In Gott ruht meine Seele*) which registers the effect of his conversion.

But what more is this than the doctrine of the immortality of the soul? What need was there for Jesus (and Paul) to use a term so eschatological as 'resurrection'? What difference is there between Jesus' 'spiritual' conception of the resurrection and our belief (and Plato's) in the immortality of the soul? The difference indeed is great. Such immortality as we believe in involves no reference to God and his 'power.' It is man's possible possibility—it is his nature to be immortal. All-too-possible, thinks the majority of our race. The favourite American device of a questionnaire lately revealed the fact that very many people shrink from the thought of immortality. St. Paul knew that very well. 'We do not wish to be unclothed,' says he (2 Cor. 5[4])—to be 'naked' soul. Neither can we be satisfied with the notion that we shall be forever clothed, and clothed

anew, with an animal body—what St. Paul calls a ' soulish body ' (1 Cor. $15^{44}$). In Asia, five hundred years before Paul's day, a gigantic questionnaire disclosed the fact that from such a view of everlasting life men recoiled in horror, embracing desperately the hope held out by Gautama, that this endless fever might be made to cease. Paul knew this very well. He knew that all ' we who are in this *tent* (*i.e.* our transient human habitation) groan at the burden of it ' ; yet he knew that what we want is not ' to be divested of it, but to be invested with the other (the heavenly body), that what is mortal may be absorbed by Life ' (2 Cor. $5^{4}$). But that is the impossible possibility which we cannot even contemplate apart from God. Hence St. Paul says in the following verse, ' It is God who wrought us for *this*.' ' This ' means nothing less than to share Christ's glory (Rom. $8^{17}$)—which is clearly no natural potentiality of our soulish life ! For us, it is not a word spoken to Moses, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ which is the ground of our hope (1 Cor. $12^{20}$), and in that also (not in the ' angels of heaven ') we find the nearest analogy of our resurrection—' in conformity with the body of his glory ' (Phil. $3^{21}$). We sinful mortals who share with Jesus this passionate eschatological belief presume even now to ' triumph in the hope of the glory of God' (Rom. $5^{2}$).

¶ 78. The Chief Commandment.

Mk $12^{28-34}$. **And one of the scribes, who had heard them arguing and recognized that Jesus had answered them well, came up to him and asked, ' What sort of commandment is chief of all in importance ? ' [29] Jesus answered, ' The chief one is this, " Hear, O Israel ! The Lord our God is one Lord, [30] and you must love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul and your whole mind and your whole strength," [31] and the second is this, " You must love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' [32] And the scribe said to him, ' Right, Teacher ! You have said truly that he is one and there is no other beside him, [33] and to love him with the whole heart and the whole understanding and the whole strength, and to love one's neighbour as one's self, is far more than all**

**these burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' [34] And Jesus, observing his intelligent answer, said to him, ' You are not far from the Kingdom of God.'**

**And no one ventured to put any more questions to him.**

It is a natural presumption that this question, like the others, was not asked with a sincere desire for information, but was put guilefully as a test. All the more because it is a scribe who asks it, and we assume that, being a scribe, he was a Pharisee. St. Matthew (22[34, 35]) interprets St. Mark by expressing both these assumptions. He represents that the Pharisees, when they saw the Sadducees discomfited, took their turn at puzzling Jesus and put forward one of their party, a ' lawyer ' (*i.e.* scribe) to ask him a test question. St. Luke, who recounts substantially this same story in another place (10[25–28]), introduces a ' lawyer ' who ' tempts ' Jesus with a question. Naturally he leaves this story out when he comes to the place where St. Mark reports it ; but he leaves just so much of St. Mark's text to show that he understands him to mean that the scribes approved of Jesus' answer to the Sadducees. For he takes words which he finds in this story and employs them as a conclusion to the paragraph about the resurrection : ' And some of the scribes took part in the conversation and said, " Teacher, you have answered finely " ' (Lk 20[39]). This, too, is a reasonable presumption. The scribes *would* be pleased with Jesus' defence of the doctrine of the resurrection. The fact is, St. Mark gives no hint that the scribe had a hostile animus in asking this question. It was not the scribes as a class or the Pharisees as a party that we have to do with here, but an individual who had been impressed with the aptness of Jesus' replies, and he might well have thought it a good occasion to get light on a problem which seriously disturbed him. In fact, this was a question which could not have got Jesus into trouble, however he had answered it. But it was a question which might well disturb a scribe. In view of ' the ten thousand precepts of the Law,' it would be a very practical help to know which were the most important. It was impossible to keep them all, or even to remember them. It would make matters easier if one could

concentrate upon those which were most important. One might have a feeling that duty towards God (the first table of the Decalogue) was more important than duty towards one's neighbours—or that pure morality (the second table) was more important than the religious cult. But the difficulty was to determine which. It is the difficulty of all legalism. There is no legal criterion to determine which of the laws prescribed by the same legislator is more important than another. All of them—including even petty and meaningless prescriptions—are precisely on the same plane.

The fact that Jesus' answer was satisfactory to the scribe, and that at the conclusion of the story this man was commended by Jesus, all serves to confirm the impression that the question was not put with hostile intent. The statement at the conclusion of this paragraph, that ' no one ventured to put any more questions to Jesus,' does not imply that this *last* question made people fearful of being discomfited by Jesus' replies. At this moment all the people who were disposed to ask ' tempting ' questions—the high priests, the scribes, the elders, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees—had had their say and taken themselves off; and now that this individual questioner has been satisfied, Jesus is left free to propound a question in his turn.

The scribe had reason to be satisfied with the answer he got, for it was an answer both deeper and more specific than he had asked for. He had asked ' What sort of commandment ? ' (*poia*—what class of commandments ?), and Jesus told him *which*—which single and definite commandment outranked all others. It was not far to seek—for one who was free enough from legalism to attempt such a distinction at all. His proof of the resurrection of the dead Jesus had found in the most important passage of Israel's religious history, and his definition of the marriage relation he had found in the most important passage of mythology. He discovered there what no one else had ever discovered. But now it seems a very obvious thing that he should discover the ' chief commandment ' in a passage which the Jews themselves regarded as the most memorable precept of the Law. For Jesus here quotes the first part (Deut. $6^{4, 5}$) of the *Shema*, that passage of Scripture which

every Jew was required to repeat daily, and which this very scribe carried in his phylactery, inscribed on a minute roll of parchment. It appears that the Jews regarded it as including the Decalogue. Only by so regarding it could they (as legalists) attribute to it pre-eminence. That appears to be St. Matthew's notion ($22^{40}$). But that is not what Jesus meant : he said that this specific commandment was the chief of all, not because it included other commandments, but because a right attitude to God is in itself the chief thing. And, in fact, it does not include all of the first table of the Decalogue. It may be thought to imply the Third Commandment (prohibition of false swearing), but it does not even imply the Fourth (prohibition of doing even good works on the Sabbath).

Matthew shows poor taste in omitting the beginning of Jesus' reply, the introduction of the *Shema*, which also gives it its name. Those are great words, and they are not without importance for what comes after. They are not a commandment, but Jesus in repeating them seems to recognize that a religious commandment is evidently valid only when it issues from a perception. It is a great and important perception which introduces the *Shema* : ' Hear, O Israel ! The Lord our God is one Lord.'

The commandment duly follows : ' And you must love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul and your whole mind and your whole strength.' It would be pedantical to distinguish the different ways in which we may love God with heart and soul and mind and strength ; for Jesus, as well as the author of Deuteronomy, evidently means to say that we must love him with our whole being. But it may be well to remember that in the Hebrew psychology the heart is the seat of the intellect. To compensate for that we have here the ' soul,' which was the seat of the affections. Nevertheless intellect seems to predominate here, for ' mind ' is another of the three terms which describes the composite nature of man, and the scribe when he repeats the commandment speaks only of the heart, the understanding, and strength. It may seem strange that the intellectual faculties are so predominantly engaged in the *love* of God. But I cannot think that this

is inept. The New Testament and the Septuagint were more fortunate than we in having two words for love at their disposal, *agapao* and *phileo*, and the second, which denotes 'physiological love,' they do not use of man's relation to God, nor prescribe it a *duty* man owes to his fellow-man. Dante's *amore dell' intelletto* is a good definition of *agape*. But on that side too we can easily exaggerate, and it is wholesome to remind ourselves that what is required of us is the devotion of our whole being to God. This, says Jesus emphatically, is the chief commandment.

Jesus, as usual, offers the inquirer more than he asks. In this case he proceeds to designate the second commandment. It is this, 'You must love your neighbour as yourself.' That, too, is a quotation from the Scripture, but it was in a most unlikely place he found it. He culls this flower from the ritual law of Leviticus ($19^{18}$), where every prescription is more trivial or absurd than another. The verse before this reads, 'Thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbour, and not bear sin because of him.' The verse which follows it is worse: 'Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind, thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed, neither shalt thou wear a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together.' Such precepts are not only perfectly indifferent to religion, but they would prohibit progress in agriculture and industry. And out of this pile of rubbish Jesus plucks the second commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' In Leviticus, as the context shows, 'neighbour' meant one of 'the children of thy people'; but in Jesus' mouth it means anyone who is brought near enough for us to love and serve. That is proved (if we need proof of it) by the story of the Good Samaritan, which is the interpretation of this commandment in St. Luke's account ($10^{29-36}$).

Jesus makes his answer more emphatic by adding, 'There is no other commandment greater than these.' No scribe before Jesus had ever thought of putting these two commandments together. They *do* match in a way the two tables of the Decalogue. Not, however, in the way of summarizing them, but by expressing the spirit which informs them. The emphasis is on the inward-disposition.

But I take it that this sentence was not uttered merely for the effect of emphasis by repetition. It asserts, in fact, something which may well surprise us. Not only in the Old Law is there no commandment which outranks these two, but not even in the Gospel, the 'New Law.' The Decalogue can be surpassed, but nothing can outbid the monotheism which is practically expressed in these two commandments—not even the evangelical precepts requiring the renunciation of the world, the following of Jesus and eschatological living.

The scribe's appreciation was finely and intelligently expressed: 'Right, Teacher! You have said truly that he is one and there is no other beside him, and to love him with the whole heart and the whole understanding and the whole strength is far more than all these burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' It would seem from this answer as if the scribes themselves were familiar with the debate whether one part of the Law (the precepts of sheer morality) might not be more important than the ritual precepts ('burnt-offerings and sacrifices'). The Pharisees, having no control of the Temple cult, might be inclined to maintain such a position as against the Sadducees. But as legalists they could, of course, come to no confident conclusion. And, besides, this question is complicated by a perilous equivocation—as *we* have experienced to our confusion. As practical persons we have formulated the question in a way which seems to us the most precise. Which is the chief commandment?—duty to God, or duty to one's neighbour? Unhesitatingly we have voted for the latter, thinking not unjustly that we have Jesus' support for the notion that a service rendered to our brethren is service rendered to *him*. But we have dully confused our duty to God with ritual and cultus, and so have created a false dilemma. Jesus clarifies the question for the scribe and for us. He discovers no opposition between the obligation to love God and the obligation to love one's neighbour. God is the only object to which we can rightly devote our whole being. The love which we entertain for ourselves is a sufficient measure for duty towards our neighbour. Hence love to God is the first commandment, and love to one's neighbour

is the second. But these two commandments are *combined*, and only as combined can they fittingly be opposed to religion as a cult, and pronounced 'far more than all these burnt-offerings and sacrifices'—which were again being offered in that very place, Jesus having put a stop to them for only one day. 1 John $4^{21}$ refers to this saying of Jesus and shows how intimately these two commandments are combined: 'This commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.' The second commandment as well as the first is a necessary and practical expression of monotheism, whereas the cultus, though it too is an expression, is not necessary.

The *whole* cultus is included in the expression, 'whole burnt-offerings [holocausts] and sacrifices.' The first term denotes the slaughtering and burning of animals which we heartily repudiate; but the second refers to meal-offerings, incense, libations, and every sort of eucharistic sacrifice—*nobilissima species sacrificiarum*, as Bengel justly says of them. *Our* cultus is therefore included in this disparagement. It is neither the first nor the second commandment; it is not a necessary expression of monotheism even in its Trinitarian form.

It is important to observe that according to the Synoptical tradition Jesus nowhere else but here, in quotations from the Old Testament, speaks in general terms of the obligation to love God or to love man. St. John, who dwells predominantly upon such commandments, was well aware that *agape* conceived so abstractly puts us in danger of loving only 'in word and with the tongue' (1 Jn $3^{18}$). That is the danger which menaces the *amore dell' intelletto*. Jesus' injunctions commonly involved a concrete act—if it was only the offer of a 'cup of water.' It cannot be said that the obligation to love our enemy is lacking in definiteness.

Jesus' commendation of this scribe was prompted by his 'intelligent answer.' Though this man could not by himself solve the problem he had proposed, he was able to appreciate the justice of Jesus' reply, and he had an intellectual sympathy with the position that a right disposition towards God and man was of more importance than

any sort of cult. For this intellectual perception Jesus not only commends him but says, 'You are not far from the Kingdom of God.' We conceive that to be a sardonic assurance. For we cannot readily admit that a man who had assumed no obligation to 'follow' Jesus and live dangerously might be admitted into the Kingdom of God, merely because he had a right intellectual apprehension of the truth. We think, therefore, that Jesus must have meant, 'so near and yet so far.' But there is no substantial difference between Jesus' commoner assurance that the Kingdom of God is near, and his assurance to this man that he is near the Kingdom of God; and Jesus, I believe, treasured the hope that when the Kingdom should come this man would have a place in it.

Here we are threatened again with the danger of intellectualism. It is certainly true that the intellectual appreciation of the truth is not all that is required of us. Nevertheless this also is required, inasmuch as the intellect is a part of our composite nature, and not the least distinguished part. The 'chief commandment' requires us to devote the 'whole' of our nature to God. This is no vague and otiose undertaking, if we conceive it as St. Paul does (2 Cor. $10^5$), as a warfare we are engaged in without truce, 'casting down imaginations and every high thing which is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'

## ¶ 79. The Son of David?

Mk $12^{35-37a}$. **And Jesus, while he was teaching in the Temple, made answer to them and said, 'How can the scribes say that the Christ is David's son? [36] David himself, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said:**

***"The Lord said to my Lord,***
***Sit at my right hand,***
***Till I make your enemies the footstool of your feet."***

**[37] David himself calls him Lord, and how can he be his son?'**

It is said that Jesus 'made answer,' but the answer he made was a question. Since no one ventured to ask him

any more questions, he himself proposed one—and left it unanswered. When he asks, 'How can the scribes say that the Christ is David's *son*?' he is not addressing the scribes, for they, along with all the other persons of importance, had already taken themselves off. For his hearers he has only the common people—representatives of the 'mass of the people' who are spoken of in the next paragraph. Neither was he 'answering' a question unreported, which might have been mooted by the scribes before they left the Temple. And yet he was 'answering'—we cannot say an unspoken question, but a prejudice so commonly and unquestioningly held that it never had been put in doubt. That was the Davidic sonship of the Messiah. Not specifically the Davidic *lineage*; for that was a claim many humble persons might make, and which was made in behalf of Jesus (10[47], p. 417), though he himself regarded it with indifference. The proof of it, though it might recommend him as a claimant, would manifestly fall far short of substantiating a Messianic claim. On the other hand, 'Son of David' meant nothing less than Messiah, and it implied a notion of the Messiah which Jesus repudiated.

Knowing as *we* do that Jesus had made no public claim of being the Messiah, and that no one yet suspected him of such presumption, it would be manifestly absurd to suppose that the difficulty he now suggests about the Davidic sonship of the Messiah was meant as an apology for his own lack of so important a credential as Davidic descent. The question whether Jesus was or was not of David's lineage is entirely unaffected by this passage. Jesus does not speak of himself here, nor did anyone suspect that he was *thinking* of himself. He speaks with apparent detachment of a certain conception of the Messiah's character, and he comes nowhere near betraying his secret.

This is the place (and the only place) where Jesus attempts to correct and sublimate the popular conception of the Messiah. And even here we cannot say that he seeks to introduce a higher view than the stupendous apocalyptic conception which the scribes themselves cherished. He seeks only to eliminate a still older view which incongruously existed alongside of this. That was the conception

involved in the title 'Son of David,' the notion that the Messiah was to be a Jewish king, ruling in Jerusalem, the instrument of the Jewish *revanche*. The analogy of Rome may have suggested the hope that he would be an *Imperator*, ruling the world. But this was only to enlarge the notion, not to exalt it. It still remained all-too-human, and Jesus utterly repudiated it. His own self-chosen designation, Son of Man, pointed in an entirely different direction. If we may trust the common source of Matthew and Luke, Jesus in his Temptation had already contemplated the idea of the *Imperator* and had rejected it as devilish. What glamour then could a petty kingship like David's have for him? How could he covet a throne in Jerusalem when he was about to prophesy the total destruction of that city? or imagine himself the head of that theocracy whose religion he had point by point denounced—Synagogue and Temple, Law and Cultus, Pharisees and Sadducees—each in detail, and all of them together in the one comprehensive condemnation, 'Let no one eat fruit of you henceforth for ever'?

Important as this question was, and personal as it was to Jesus, it is treated here as a scholastic question (a dictum of the scribes) and argued in the scholastic manner which the scribes themselves would use and would appreciate. To us the argument appears not only *spitzfindig* but fallacious, because we do not ascribe to David the Psalm from which Jesus quotes. Nevertheless we can recognize that as an *argumentum ad hominem* it was unanswerable. The scribes accepted this as a word of David uttered by divine inspiration. They therefore would be forced to acknowledge (however it conflicted with their theory) that David spoke of the Messiah, not as his son and successor seated on *his* throne, but as his 'Lord'—an equivocal title which here, however, is plainly interpreted as a divine designation by the fact that to David's Lord there is allotted, as God's assessor, a throne infinitely more exalted than that of David.

The *argumentum ad hominem*, though it is formally classed as a fallacy, is none the less effective in debate. I do not mean, however, to imply that Jesus was ironically

addressing to the scribes an argument which he knew to be fallacious, nor have I any intention of apologizing for his ignorance of the composition of the Old Testament, which the critical discernment of our own age has for the first time illuminated. But we may be sure that it was not by such logomachy Jesus attained his lofty conception of the dignity of the Messiah. He found in these words a significant confirmation of a view which he already confidently entertained. Though for the purposes of controversy he dwells only upon the negative inference that can be drawn from this passage—its plain incongruity with the more primitive notion of the Messiah—we may be sure that what he found most precious was the positive statement it contains. Leaving David out of the question, it remains even to us mysterious and impressive that any writer in the Old Testament could form so lofty a conception of the Messiah —could represent Jahve as saying to him, ' Sit at my right hand.' That goes beyond Daniel's allusion ($7^{13}$) to ' one like a son of man ' who came even before the Ancient of Days. It suggested rather a Son of God, and Jesus himself merges it with Daniel's phrase when he makes his proud confession before the high priest ($14^{62}$), ' You shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power.'

We may be sure that the last line he quotes (' Till I make your enemies a footstool for your feet ') did not suggest to Jesus the petty advantage he had just gained over high priests and Sadducees and Pharisees, but his ultimate, his celestial triumph, his resurrection from the dead and his ascension to heaven. According to a solemn word of St. Paul's (1 Cor. $15^{25, 26}$) this triumph is not even yet complete : ' for he must reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death.' That Jesus' discovery of this passage of Scripture was not a trifling one is proved by the fact that it was most precious to the early Church, being referred to more frequently in the New Testament than any other passage in the Old. St. Peter (Acts $2^{34}$), St. Stephen (Acts $7^{56}$), St. Paul (Rom. $8^{34}$, *etc.*), and whoever else ever spoke of Jesus' session at the right hand of God derived the notion from this passage. That is to say, they derived it from *him*. For there is no

doubt about the authenticity of this saying. It is a ' pillar passage,' for it *disparages*, if it does not exclude, the Davidic lineage of Jesus of which the early Church made so much account. It is just these pillar passages which reveal most clearly the incredible presumption of Jesus—which euphemistically we call his ' self-consciousness.' It appears, then, that the Apostles (including St. Paul) could find nothing more extravagant to say about the heavenly Christ than Jesus himself had already imagined and even hinted.

### ¶ 80. Denunciation of the Scribes.

Mk $12^{37b-40}$. **The mass of the people listened to him gladly.** [38] **And in the course of his teaching he said, ' Beware of the scribes,** [39] **who like to go about in long robes, to receive obsequious salutations in the streets, to secure seats of distinction in the synagogues, and enjoy places of honour at banquets,—**[40] **who eat widows out of house and home, and disguise their rapacity by making long prayers,—who will receive a far heavier sentence.'**

Mark's phrase, ' in the course of his teaching,' seems intended to leave room for the much more comprehensive invective against ' the scribes and Pharisees ' which Matthew ($23^{1-39}$) reports from another and probably no less reliable a source. And although the longer diatribe is couched in the form of a direct address (' Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! '), it seems likely that this form was rhetorical, and that these terrible invectives were not launched directly in the face of the persons they so clearly denounce. For Matthew agrees with Mark that Jesus was addressing only ' the multitudes and his disciples.' However that may be, this was plainly another provocation. We need not wonder that all the parties in power united to destroy this terrible man (' the meek and gentle Jesus ').

We cannot but ask ourselves if there was ever any religious party or establishment, any church or conventicle, in which Jesus would have felt at home, or any class of religious persons with whom he would have been contented.

He does not spare us, the scribes of to-day. Not me at least, for I go about sometimes in long robes, I like obsequious salutations, a chief seat in the synagogue, and a place of honour at banquets. Nor does he spare the pious laity, as we shall see in the next paragraph.

¶ 81. Spying on the Righteous.

Mk 12[41–44]. **And he sat down directly opposite the treasury and watched how the crowd dropped their money into the box. And many who were rich dropped in large sums, [42] but a poor widow came and dropped in two little coins amounting to a cent. [43] And he called his disciples and said to them, 'Amen I say to you, that this poor widow has dropped more into the treasury than all these others who have been dropping their money into it. [44] For they all gave what they had to spare, but she in her want gave all that she possessed, all she had to live on.'**

Here again we find Jesus seated—not now, however, as a teacher, but as a spy. Before leaving the Temple 'he sat down directly opposite the treasury,' where he was in a position to watch 'how' the people, passing in single file, dropped their free-will offerings into the box. Business is business, and although Jesus had stopped the traffic of the Temple for a day, it was now going on again as usual. Jesus, after what he had said about the scribes, now turns his attention to the laity—and precisely to that class of them which would be least disposed to resent the imputation that they were righteous. Almsgiving was one of the principal proofs of 'righteousness' (Mt 6[1, 2]), and certainly free-will gifts to the Temple would not be accounted less meritorious. People had the proud consciousness that they were benefactors of God. And Jesus sat there watching 'how' they did it. The picture he draws (Lk 18[10–13]) of a publican and a Pharisee in the Temple proves how keen an eye he had for the scarcely observable traits by which the body betrays the soul. His sayings suffice to convince us that he was a shrewd judge of character, but here for the first time he is depicted as an observer taking notes.

This terrible man spares nobody—not even the good

people who support the Church. We of the clergy judge, very rightly, that no good work is more important than 'giving to the Lord,' and yet the dullest of us sometimes remark 'how' they do it. It *is* a principal part of righteousness, but Jesus' injunction not to do our righteousness to be seen of men is in part justified by the consideration that we do it so ungracefully. For it is just there—in our righteousness, in our religion, at the tiptoe of our spiritual achievement—that we betray most ignominiously how human we are. Our prayers, our almsgiving, our fasting—Jesus derided them all. 'Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.' We can understand that the cynical outsider can take delight in detecting how bad we are at our best, but that Jesus should be so engaged—*et tu, Jesu!*—fills us with dismay. That he should deliberately sit down to spy upon the righteous, to observe 'how' they dropped in their gifts, with what evidence of complacency, of superiority—of condescension even, it might be. . . .

But this is not the whole of the story. Jesus was no cynic. He delighted in none of these things, but with unerring sympathy he detected in this unlikely company the perfect giver—a poor widow who shamefacedly 'gave all that she possessed' and showed that she loved God with *all* her soul. *That* Jesus regarded as a 'beautiful deed' (which ought to be seen of men), and her he singled out for everlasting remembrance wherever this Gospel shall be preached (14[9]).

### ¶ 82. The Temple Doomed.

Mk 13[1, 2]. **And as he was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what immense stones! And what immense buildings!' [2] And Jesus said to him, 'You see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left here upon another without being torn down.'**

This saying was uttered by Jesus as he was leaving the Temple, and it is a fit conclusion to his day of teaching there. The Temple and all that it stood for was not only condemned, it was doomed. This is a prophecy, but it has no apocalyptic tinge, and it is rightly separated by St. Mark from the

apocalyptic prophecy which was pronounced on the Mount of Olives.

'One of his disciples' voiced the feelings of all these countrymen on beholding the size and solidity of metropolitan buildings. The Temple had been lately rebuilt by Herod the Great, but the foundations dated from a time when men employed stones of so great a size that it seemed as if only the Cyclops might be capable of moving them. Jesus, though he had no larger an experience of the world than his disciples, was unimpressed. With a flaming imagination he had contemplated 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them' (Mt $4^{8}$), and was not greatly impressed. The calm tone—without emphasis and without pathos—in which he pronounces the doom of 'these great buildings' gives us the measure of his detachment from his nation and from its religion. For 'these buildings' were the Temple, with its precinct, which was not only the symbolical centre of the religion of Israel, but the only evidence remaining to support the fiction that the Jewish nation was still a State.

This prediction was fulfilled in a short time, and literally enough, in spite of the fact that some of the great stones the Apostles gaped at remain *in situ*, a 'place of wailing' for Jewish pilgrims. And although it was fulfilled, there are few men sceptical enough to doubt that this is a prophecy which was actually uttered by Jesus. If it had not been reported, we must have inferred it from the charge which was brought at the trial ($14^{58}$) and from the charge brought against St. Stephen (Acts $6^{14}$).

The words which Jesus uttered in the Temple have always seemed to me the most interesting of all that are recorded, and the most worthy of comment. The fact that my comment has been brief—merely to the effect of eliminating our most facile prejudices, and very much briefer than I felt obliged to devote to less important sayings which we encountered at the beginning of this study—is proof that such labour was not vainly spent upon the early part of the Gospel, and that now we are so far prepared to understand Jesus that we need little or no help from the commentator.

## Section 10. ¶¶ 83–87
## AN APOCALYPSE
## Mk 13[3–37]

### ¶ 83. When? and What Sign?

Mk 13[3,4]. **And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him in private, [4] 'Tell us when this is to happen, and what will be the sign when all this is about to be accomplished.'**

This is an alluring introduction to a very questionable passage. We would expect Jesus to repair to the Mount of Olives after his day of teaching in the Temple; we are pleased to have this confirmation of our conjecture that he lodged there in the open (no one indeed was more used to that than he), and we are glad to learn that the spot he had chosen gave him a view of the Temple and of the greater part of Jerusalem. The Paschal moon, nearly at its full, illuminated the city with an unreal light appropriate to fantastic prophecy. We are not surprised to be told that the three intimate disciples approach Jesus privately to learn from him mysterious secrets, and we are well content to note that for once Andrew is in their company, though he is mentioned last of all. It seems natural that the disciples should want to know more than Jesus had told them in his dry prediction of the doom of the Temple. They would want to know 'when this is to happen,' and by what 'sign' they were to detect that the time was near. That they were thinking of the Temple they did not need to say, for it was before their eyes and they could point to it—as the Evangelist is careful to note. To me it seems natural, too, that they should think of the destruction of the Temple as coincident with 'the accomplishment of all things'—that is, the end of this world and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God—and should therefore ask, 'What will be the sign when *all this* is about to be accomplished?'

We have encountered no passage in the Gospel which is more plausible than this and more commends itself to our

judgment. And yet it introduces a long apocalyptic prophecy of a character so alien to Jesus' manner that we can hardly credit St. Mark's ascription of it to him. No passage we have hitherto studied in the Gospel prepares us for such a discourse as this. We may boast that we found ourselves prepared to understand Jesus' sayings in the Temple, but for this discourse we are totally unprepared. If I feel that loyalty to the Evangelist compels me to accept it, I feel also that it may be a disloyalty to Jesus to credit him with sayings which are so little to his credit.

But I recognize that we all of us approach this discourse with our various prejudices. Not to speak of the scholars who on principle are opposed to the acknowledgment of eschatology as a prominent feature of the Gospels, we have to confess that the commonality of sensible Christians are prejudiced against the apocalyptic form of prophecy. It is significant that the stress of the late war prompted a revival of interest in apocalyptic imagery, and that may make it possible for the sober-minded to appreciate the appeal which such fantastic visions made to unfortunate people who were always at war or always in danger of it. One thinks especially of those distressful times which preceded the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. But the trouble about this apocalypse is that it is not apocalyptic enough to appeal to a fervid fancy. It totally lacks one of the most characteristic features of this *genre*, namely, celestial visions with angelic voices to interpret them. One might think that at least the eschatological school would be prejudiced in favour of this apocalypse. On the contrary, they feel obliged to repudiate it because it is not thoroughgoing in its eschatology. It contemplates too long an interval between the Lord's death and the ' consummation.'

Perhaps no one approaches this passage with so little prejudice as we. For though on the one hand we have seen that ideas of such immense importance as the Kingdom of God and the Son of Man were derived from Jewish apocalyptic, and therefore cannot think it incredible that other elements of this literature, particularly such as are found in the Book of Daniel, might be congenial to Jesus ; on the other hand we have not been such thoroughgoing

eschatologists as to discredit the instances in which Jesus looks forward to the Church and enjoins precepts which are applicable only to the interval succeeding his death. But our trouble is that the apocalyptic ideas which Jesus most intimately appropriated do not appear here at all. In this whole apocalypse there is not one word about the Kingdom of God, and the 'Son of Man' who appears in verse 26 as one of the signs of the last times seems to have nothing whatever to do with Jesus. In short, the *Gospel* is lacking in this prophecy. We who have admitted the authenticity of the doom of the Temple are disposed to expect a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. We may even think it necessary to suppose that Jesus uttered such a prophecy. For how else can we account for the fact that the first martyr, St. Stephen, was condemned for the proposition 'that Jesus shall destroy this place' (Acts $6^{14}$)? Or for the fact that (according to Eusebius, *H.E.* iii. 5) the Christian community in Jerusalem, attached as they were to the Holy City, heeded a prophet who warned them to leave Jerusalem before the siege? But our expectation is deluded by this apocalypse. For not to speak of the fact that there is no allusion to the destruction of the Temple, Jerusalem is not mentioned in this passage; and though it may be assumed that the city is to suffer along with the rest of the land from wars which occasion unexampled misery, yet a great part of the population will survive, and it seems as if the dispersed of Israel are to be gathered again in Sion. The vagueness of this prediction may justify us in dating its composition before the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, but we can hardly use it as a proof that Jesus was the author.

In fact, there is very little that is original or even 'Christian' in this prophecy. Scholars who are versed in this literature affirm confidently that a great part of this chapter ($13^{7-8, 14-20, 24-27}$) consists of the commonplaces of Jewish apocalyptic. It is true, of course, that Jesus might have employed traditional descriptions of the woes of the last days—but hardly without transforming them, hardly without putting upon them the stamp of his originality and illuminating them by his imagination. Christians must have composed this prophecy, but we wonder that they did

nothing to convert these Jewish originals to a Christian use, except by way of supplementing them with descriptions of the peculiar sufferings which the Church has to endure. To say that these supplementary passages are 'Christian' is very far from implying that we can plausibly ascribe them to Jesus. The 'Christian' passages recount in detail the temptations and tribulations which the disciples of the first generation actually did encounter. But that is what the disciples naturally would recount if they were composing a consolatory prophecy. So the aptness of the prophecy, counting both ways, proves nothing.

St. Luke's Gospel was certainly written after the destruction of Jerusalem; for in place of the vague and mysterious reference to 'the abomination of desolation' (Mk $13^{14}$) he puts a concrete reference to the siege (Lk $21^{20}$), 'when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies.' But evidently the prophecy as a whole was composed earlier and was currently ascribed to Jesus. Since Luke alone made that significant alteration, we may argue that the Gospels of Matthew and Mark were written before the siege. That is the only datum of great value which we can derive from this apocalypse.

I have already (p. 316) expressed my belief that no part of Jesus' teaching was so likely to be misrepresented as his eschatology, and that the error of the tradition would generally be on the side of exaggeration. During his earthly life, as Mark seems to take pains to show ($8^{21}$, $9^{10, 32}$), the disciples did not understand his plainest eschatological predictions—and would they understand them perfectly after his death? When so early a witness as Papias, reporting the stories of the presbyter John, an acquaintance of the Apostles, can ascribe to Jesus the fantastic promise that in the Kingdom of Heaven 'every vine will have ten thousand stems, every stem ten thousand branches, every branch ten thousand sprouts, every sprout ten thousand clusters, every cluster ten thousand grapes, and every single grape when pressed will yield twenty-five barrels of wine'—what extravagance would they stop at?

Only the last paragraph ($13^{28-37}$) of this prophecy seems to me plausibly attributable to Jesus. That, however, is not prophecy, but a sober warning, in the tone of the long

parables which St. Matthew ($24^{37}$–$25^{46}$) appends with great plausibility. Because this apocalypse throws so little light, so doubtfully, upon the character and teaching of Jesus, I pass it over with the briefest comment, preferring to refer the reader to such an authority on apocalyptic as Dr. Charles (*Eschatology*, p. 325 ff.). I print in italics the parts of the prophecy which seem to be of purely Jewish origin.

### ¶ 84. Take Heed!

Mk $13^{5-13}$. **Then Jesus said to them:**

**'Take heed not to be misled by anyone. [6] Many will come in my name, saying, "I am he," and will mislead many.** ***[7] But when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. For these things must occur, but it is not the end yet. [8] For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes, there will be famines—this is only the beginning of birth-pangs.*** **[9] Take heed to yourselves. They will hand you over to sanhedrins, and you shall be beaten in the synagogues, and you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness to them. [10] And first the Gospel must be preached to all nations. [11] And when they are carrying you off for trial, do not worry beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you when the time comes, for it is not you who are the speakers, but the Holy Spirit.** ***[12] And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against their parents and kill them.*** **[13] And you shall be hated by all men on account of my name. But he who holds out to the end shall be saved.'**

'Take heed!' is the refrain of this whole apocalypse (verses 9, 23, 33), which in verse 33 yields to the more emphatic variation 'Watch!' which at the end (verses 34, 35, 37), in the passage I consider genuine, becomes dominant. That is the theme of the examples and parables which Matthew ($24^{37}$–$25^{46}$) annexes to this prophecy, and which certainly come from an entirely different source. Not only so, but 'Watch!' is Jesus' warning to the three disciples in Gethsemane ($14^{38}$). It seems as if this is just what Jesus would

say in answer to the question ' When ? ' In answer to the question, ' Are there few saved ? ' he replied, ' Strive ! '

The question ' When ? ' may well have been asked on the Mount of Olives, and Jesus may well have answered ' Take heed ! Watch ! ' But if he replied also to the question, ' What sign ? ' and gave the answer which we read here, no one would feel compelled to keep awake and to watch. They could rely upon the alarm to wake them. The ' parable ' of the fig tree implies that there would be signs of the near approach of the Kingdom of God which alert intelligence would recognize, and verse 29 (if it is genuine) denotes that Jesus had given some indication what these signs were. But perhaps his were not such indications as would readily be preserved in a tradition which was naturally influenced by the commonplaces of Jewish apocalyptic.

There was danger, of course, that the disciples might be ' misled ' ; but the first instance of danger which is here mentioned is far from being plausible. Indeed, it is not credible that *anyone* would ' come in my name ' (*i.e.* as a Christian—as in verse 13) and proclaim that he was Christ. ' I am (he) ' can hardly mean anything else but that *he is I*, and one would think that Jesus' personal disciples would not be deceived by that claim. The disciples were actually in danger (2 Thess. $2^{2\,ff.}$) from ' false prophets ' (verse 21), but ' false Christs ' could not conceivably arise in the Church, nor could Jewish pretenders to this title be a danger to Christians. It would seem as if even this ' Christian ' part of the prophecy was but imperfectly adapted to its use. Antichrist was a Christian conception (1 Jn $2^{22}$, *etc.*)—but that was a very different thing.

Verses 7 and 8, predicting wars and earthquakes and famines, are as much a commonplace of Jewish eschatology as verses 24 and 25 which depict the sympathetic agitation of the heavens—sun, moon, and stars. Only here they are less impressively described than in any Old Testament passage, and they lack the form which gives glamour to apocalyptic prophecy. We need only compare it with the ' red horse ' of Rev. $6^{4}$. We are not accustomed to see Jesus referring to the ancient Scriptures without bettering

them. In the stress of warfare and fearful turmoil even we might prefer to express ourselves by lurid pictures rather than in dry words, but what we have here is uninspiring apocalyptic in lecture form.

Verse 9, incongruously appended to the preceding generalities, applies specifically to the Christian community, recounting what did in fact happen to the early disciples, first among the Jews (Acts $5^{40}$; 2 Cor. $11^{24}$), and then in the Gentile mission. The story of St. Paul in the Acts sufficiently illustrates what is meant by being 'brought before governors and kings,' and shows how effective this 'witness' might be for the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles. The word 'witness' (*martyrion*) is here used in the characteristic Christian sense of martyrdom, which was conceived broadly enough to include imprisonment and cruel suffering on behalf of Christ, as well as the penalty of death. That is made clear by the following verse, for it was a common opinion in the early Church that the Holy Spirit speaks through the martyrs.

Verse 12 reproduces, so far as the present application permits, Micah's description ($7^{1-6}$) of the total dissolution of family and social relationships, which was a commonplace of Jewish eschatology. But even when it is reduced to these proportions it exaggerates the persecutions which Christian converts encountered on the part of their Jewish relatives. The last verse must have been a bitter commonplace among Gentile Christians; for, surprising as it seems to us, the mere 'name' of Christian aroused odium, and we know that somewhat later it justified the death penalty. He who endures to the end has the assurance of Eternal Life. 'Saved' has that highest significance here, and 'endurance' was a virtue frequently stressed in early Christian literature.

¶ 85. The First Sign.

Mk $13^{14-23}$. ***'But when you see the Abomination of Desolation standing where he has no right to stand (let the reader take note), then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains,*** [15] ***and he who is on the house-top must not go down into the house or enter in to get anything out of***

***his house,*** [16] ***and he who is in the field must not turn back to get his coat.*** [17] ***But alas for those who are about to become mothers in those days, and for those who have children at the breast!*** [18] ***But pray that it may not come in winter!*** [19] ***For those days will be a time of misery the like of which there never has been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be again.*** [20] ***And if the Lord*** (Jahve) ***had not cut the days short, not a soul would be saved*** (***i.e.*** escape). ***But for the sake of his own chosen people he has cut the days short.***

[21] ***And then, if anyone says to you, " Look, here is the Christ!" or, " Look, there he is!" do not believe it.*** [22] ***For there will arise false Christs and false prophets, and will perform signs and wonders, to mislead God's chosen people if they can.*** [23] **But you must take heed. I have told you it all beforehand.'**

This is Jewish apocalyptic pure and simple, with nothing but the last verse added to apply it to a Christian use. ' Let the reader take note ' suggests that for this whole prophecy Mark had a *written* source. Jesus was, of course, not speaking to readers but to hearers. Matthew ($24^{15}$) seeks to justify this phrase by referring expressly to the prophet Daniel. Not very adroitly, for instead of saying *written*, he says ' spoken of by the prophet Daniel.' ' The Abomination of Desolation ' is a name three times repeated in the apocalypse of Daniel ($9^{27}$, $11^{31}$, $12^{11}$), and the Greek translation (though it did not rightly render the sense of it) was familiar to all. That it is used here in a perfectly mysterious sense is proved by the fact that Luke, writing after the siege of Jerusalem, promptly puts in its place this concrete event. The Roman armies had ' no right ' to stand on the soil of the Holy Land.

But the original prophecy surprises us by making no reference whatever to Jerusalem. It speaks only of the land of Judaea, and has in mind only the Jews. The Jews ' who are in Judaea ' implies a thought of the dispersion. But there is no thought at all of the Christians, who, as a matter of fact, safely left Jerusalem before the siege and remained unmolested at Pella.

I have already remarked that Christians were not likely to be misled by 'false Christs.' 'Lord' (*Kyrios*) without the article must refer to Jahve; 'saved' means in this case merely *escape*; and the 'elect' are God's chosen people Israel.

¶ 86. The Second Sign.

Mk $13^{24-27}$. ***'But in those days, when that misery is past, the sun will be darkened,*** [25] ***and the moon will not shed its light, and the stars will drop from the sky, and the celestial powers will be shaken.*** [26] ***And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*** [27] ***And then he will send out the angels and gather the chosen people from the four winds, from the border of the land to the border of the sky (i.e. the horizon).'***

'The Son of Man' (Dan. $7^{13}$) in this passage seems to have nothing to do with Jesus. One would think that Jesus might have said to his intimate disciples, *You* shall see *me* coming as the Son of Man. It is wholly impossible that, speaking to *them*, he could say coldly, '*they* will see.' The Son of Man is the second 'sign,' as Matthew rightly interprets it. 'The Abomination of Desolation' was the sign of the beginning of the 'misery,' this of the end of it—which is also the beginning of a new age which is barely alluded to. (Christian eschatology begins where the Jewish ended.) After terrestrial disturbances (wars, earthquakes, famines) come the celestial (Isa. $13^{10}$, $24^{23}$; Ez. $32^{7, 8}$; Amos. $8^{9}$)—the last item of which is the appearance of the Son of Man. The Son of Man is treated here as no more than a sign. Presumably it is not he who 'sends out the angels,' but Jahve, who already had showed his compassion by shortening the days. Here the dispersed of Israel are expressly included along with the Jews who remained in 'the land.' It is amazing that a Jewish apocalypse could have been adopted by Jewish Christians with no alterations and with so few additions.

What is most conspicuously lacking in this apocalypse is the *Gospel*. 'Shall not the Day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?'

says Amos ($5^{20}$)—and so says this Jewish-Christian apocalypse. Not only does it throw no light upon the teaching of Jesus, but it woefully obscures it. Contrast with this Paul's ' triumph in the hope of the glory of God ' (Rom. $5^{2}$), or the apocalyptic passages in his Epistles (1 Thess. $4^{13-18}$, $5^{1-16}$; 2 Thess. $2^{1-12}$). This Jewish apocalypse, because it was incorporated in the Gospel of St. Mark (and hence in Matthew and Luke), has received the fullest credence and has exercised a baleful influence upon the Christian conception of the Day of the Lord. Luke only ($21^{28}$) interjects a truly evangelical expression: ' But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.' It was *Dies irae* for the mediaeval Church, and few Christians since the Middle Ages have regarded it like Vaughan as the ' dearly loved day.'

O day of life, of light, of love !
The only day dealt from above !
A day so fresh, so bright, so brave,
'Twill show us each forgotten grave,
And make the dead, like flowers, arise
Youthful and fair to see new skies.

¶ 87. WATCH !

Mk $13^{28-37}$. **' Let the fig tree teach you a parable. As soon as its branches grow soft and put out leaves you recognize that summer is near. [29] So you, whenever you see these things happening, should recognize that it is near, at the very door. [30] *Amen* I say to you, that this age will not pass away before all these things happen. [31] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. [32] But about that day and that hour no one knows,—not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son, but only the Father. [33] Take heed ! watch ! and pray ! For you do not know when the time is. [34] Just as when a man going on a journey leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his work to do, and orders the porter to watch. [35] Watch ! therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning—[36] lest coming unexpectedly he find you asleep. [37] What I say to you I say to all, Watch ! '**

Though I cannot be sure that every word reported in this paragraph was actually uttered by Jesus, there is nothing that cannot plausibly be attributed to him. There is a glaring difference between this and the foregoing prophecy. We seem here to be breathing a different air. Here we have lively imagery, a genuine apocalyptic tone, though without definite prophecy; and we have the alert orientation towards the future which is the essential note of eschatology. A still more striking difference is the direct personal address. The second person plural is used throughout, and with marked emphasis. 'So *you*, whenever you see things happening, will recognize,' implies that only the Christian fellowship is in the secret. The words are spoken to the four disciples, but it is expected that they will be disclosed to all, as the last verse expressly says. 'These things' and 'all these things' are phrases which evidently refer to a foregoing prophecy; but the Jewish commonplaces we have just been reviewing could hardly be regarded as a Christian secret. I can more easily believe that Jesus made a perfectly mysterious reference to 'the Abomination of Desolation,' or to such a figure as 'the Man of Sin' which appears in 2 Thess. 2[4]. It was like Jesus, in revealing his secrets, to reveal them mysteriously. And here it would seem that a definite prediction about times and signs such as we have been reviewing is excluded by verse 32. We may perhaps prefer that Jesus should not clothe his thought and half disguise it in strange, symbolical figures, or even that he should make no predictions at all; but Solovieff's *Antichrist* shows how enthralling an effect such predictions may have, even for the modern mind.

It does not seem to me that the vague 'it' in verse 29 can refer to the sign of the Son of Man which was so impersonally introduced in the preceding paragraph. Such a reference must be made with more emphasis. In fact, we have no pronoun in Greek text, but only the third person of the substantive verb. I feel sure that St. Luke interprets correctly when he says (21[31]) 'that the Kingdom of God is near'; and yet the vague phrase seems to me more likely to be authentic.

It is well known that the first generation of Jesus'

disciples expected his return during their lifetime, and this may be thought to imply that he made a prediction to this effect, or at least in terms which the disciples could interpret in such a sense. Such a prediction we have here in verse 30, recommended emphatically to our attention by Jesus' characteristic, '*Amen* I say to you.' The word (*genea*) which here limits the time of the fulfilment of the prediction may indicate the generation then living, but it may equally well be translated by 'age,' which one can stretch much further, even indefinitely far; and it seems to me more honest to give the Lord the benefit of the doubt—especially in view of the fact that in verse 32 he so modestly disclaims the competence to predict when 'that day' will be.

The next phrase, 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away,' we commonly interpret as a corroboration of the preceding sentence which is already so strongly affirmed with an '*Amen*' But such an interpretation creates an impossible contradiction with the verse which follows. Moreover, it requires that Jesus should say *this word*, instead of using so inclusive an expression as 'my words.' For these reasons (and not merely because it is more agreeable) Wellhausen's interpretation is preferable. In view of his departure, and of the interval that must elapse before his return, Jesus consoles his disciples with the thought that his words *remain*, the most precious possession of the Church.

Verse 32, as the conclusion of such a prophecy as we find in this chapter, is glaringly inconsistent. But we can more easily eliminate the whole prophecy than remove this pillar from its place. It possesses all the criteria of a 'pillar passage,' and there is no singularity in the fact that in making a humble disclaimer it betrays the most exorbitant presumption. '*The* Son' in correlation with 'the Father' expresses the *non plus ultra* of early Church orthodoxy, unexampled elsewhere in this Gospel.

'Watch ! and pray !' recurs in Jesus' admonition to the three disciples in Gethsemane ($14^{38}$). Nowhere else does Jesus enjoin upon his disciples the duty of prayer. And here indeed it is not as a duty he thinks of it, but as an imperious necessity. They must watch and pray in view

of the pressing danger that they might encounter such trials as human nature is unable to meet and to endure. This is plainly expressed in $14^{38}$, where the substance of their prayer is indicated, 'that you may not be subjected to trial' (*cp.* Lk $22^{40}$). That is the very prayer Jesus had just been making on his own account. It is the last petition of the more primitive *Pater noster* (Lk $11^{4}$).

Verse 34 is so much in the character of St. Matthew's long parables that it may be meant as an abbreviation of them. They are not discredited by the fact that Mark refers to them only by a curt abbreviation, for he had so little liking for parables that in the chapter he expressly dedicates to them he confesses that many are omitted ($4^{33}$). St. Matthew's parable of the thief ($24^{43}$) is clearly referred to by St. Paul in 1 Thess. $5^{2, 4}$, where he assumes that the Christians whom he is addressing 'know perfectly well' the truth he recalls to them. That implies that this was a part of Jesus' prediction. In fact, we are nowhere so reliably informed about the character of Jesus' last prediction as by these words of St. Paul. They strongly confirm the paragraph we are here studying, and supply all the comment we need upon the last three verses. It is refreshing to be able to conclude our painful study of this section by quoting the genuinely Christian apocalyptic of St. Paul (1 Thess. $5^{1-11}$): 'But about times and seasons, brothers, you do not need to have anybody write to you, for you yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. When they are saying, "Peace and security!" then suddenly destruction comes upon them, like the birth-pangs of a woman with child, and there will be no escape. But *you*, brothers, are not in darkness, that that Day should overtake you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to night and darkness. Well, then, let us not sleep like other men, but let us be watchful and sober. For those who sleep sleep at night, and drunkards are drunk at night. But we who are of the day must be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died

for us in order that whether we are " awake " or " asleep in death " we may *live* together with him. Wherefore encourage one another and edify each other—just as you are doing.'

## Section 11. ¶¶ 88–93

## DEATH IMPENDING

### Mk 14[1–25]

¶ 88. The Conspiracy.

Mk 14[1, 2]. **Now the festival of the Passover and of Unleavened Bread was after two days. And the high priests and the scribes were seeking how they could get hold of him by craft and put him to death. [2] For they said, ' Not on the day of the festival, for fear of a popular riot.'**

I preserve the awkward phrase, ' after two days,' because it is characteristic, and because some have founded a fallacious argument upon it. In 8[31] ' after three days ' is used with reference to the resurrection of Jesus. It does not designate very aptly the period which elapsed between the burial and the resurrection. For since Jesus was buried just before sunset and the tomb was found empty very early on the morning of the third day, only two nights and one day had elapsed—only the half of three days. A less awkward phrase, ' on the third day,' became current later to indicate the time of Jesus' resurrection. But inasmuch as St. Mark uses the early phrase for this brief period of time, he cannot be supposed to indicate a longer period by ' after two days.' This point has to be argued because some seize upon this expression to prove that Mark betrays a trace of the view championed by the Fourth Gospel, that Jesus was put to death on the day preceding the festival, the day when the Paschal lamb was slain. The Johannine tradition has much to recommend it, but it can hardly be proved from St. Mark, who is as clear as the other Synoptists in representing that Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples. The Synoptic tradition is, in fact, Mark's

tradition; and it would require very clear evidence to convince us that an author whom we have found so reliable is here inconsistent with himself.

Even if the phrase, 'after two days,' were unequivocal, no argument could be based upon it, because we do not know the terminus from which the time is reckoned. We cannot suppose that the sequence in Mark's narrative is so strictly chronological at this point that he means to put the conspiracy of the influential members of the Sanhedrin late at night, immediately *after* Jesus' apocalyptic discourse on the Mount of Olives. The fact is, we have here another clear instance of Mark's preference for topical arrangement. I can entitle this section (14[1–25]) 'Death Impending,' for Mark has brought together here everything that plainly points forward to Jesus' death, up to the moment of his arrest. It is plausible to suppose that the high priests and scribes (all the influential members of the Sanhedrin), having failed to get the better of Jesus by argument, left the Temple in disgust and immediately got together to plan for action. That would be on Wednesday, well before sunset, which was the ending of the day according to Jewish reckoning, and the night when Jesus was arrested was the beginning of Friday, the first day of the festival. The phrase, 'after two days,' barely reaches so far as this. Still, one whole day had elapsed and a fraction of two more. The precaution not to make the arrest 'on the *day* of the festival' was a wise one, but no time could have been more opportune than the *night* of that day, when all the pilgrims were quietly celebrating the Passover indoors, or were already asleep after that solemnity was terminated. The hasty convocation of notables in the house of the high priest (14[53]) was in the night, and early in the morning the statement was prepared for delivery to Pilate (15[1]). The populace would have no inkling of all that, and when once Jesus was in the hands of the Roman authority there was no fear that a popular riot would avail to liberate him.

This passage represents that the high priests and scribes had no debate then (*cp.* Jn 11[47–53]) about the propriety of putting this man to death. On that they were already resolved. Jesus had given them sufficient provocation.

Their only problem was 'how?' The problem was a double one—as later more clearly appears (14[55]). They had not only to devise 'how they could get hold of him by craft,' but how they could put him to death—that is, how they could find a charge against him which would legally justify his condemnation by the Sanhedrin and at the same time seem to the Roman authority grave enough to justify the death penalty. That problem remained unresolved until Judas appeared with his offer to 'betray' Jesus (14[10, 11]). This passage, therefore, is meant by St. Mark as a preparation for the story of Judas' betrayal. St Luke (22[3]) makes the relation clearer by putting these two stories together. St. Mark evidently thought it more artistic to leave the reader in suspense while he told the story of the supper at Bethany, which was another indication of the near approaching death.

¶ 89. The Supper at Bethany.

Mk 14[3–9]. **And when he was at Bethany, seated at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came in with a flask of the most costly sort of precious perfume, and breaking the flask poured it on his head. [4] There were some present, however, who expressed to one another their indignation: 'What was the use of such a waste of perfume? [5] For this perfume might have been sold for more than sixty dollars, and the money given to the poor.' So they grumbled at her. [6] But Jesus said, 'Let her alone. Why are you vexing her? It is a beautiful deed she has done to me. [7] For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you please you can do good to them—but you will not always have me. [8] What lay in her power she has done: in anticipation she has perfumed my body for its burial. [9] *Amen* I say to you, wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the whole world, what she has done will also be talked about in memory of her.'**

The supper at Bethany was the end of a very long day. It was apparently a party of some size, for besides Jesus and his disciples there seem to have been other guests who 'grumbled' at the woman. We wonder that there was time for such a feast after the eschatological discourse on

the Mount of Olives. We wonder, too, that Jesus had the heart to attend a convivial banquet when he knew that his death was so near. From St. Mark's story it would seem that this was the first banquet he was invited to since he deserted Galilee. We wonder even that the disciples were in a mood for a banquet when they had just heard such grim disclosures about the ' last things.' In fact we would be inclined to think that this banquet properly belonged to another time and place, if Jesus' reference to his death did not fix it in the place where Mark has put it, as the last supper but one which he was to eat before he died.

We are surprised to learn here that, besides acquaintances among the Galilean pilgrims, Jesus had friends dwelling in Bethany who could invite him to their house. As the host's name is mentioned, it is probable that he was known later as a member of the early Church. As he is called ' the leper,' we may conjecture that he had travelled to Galilee and been cured by Jesus. He must have been a leper *cured* of his leprosy, or he could not have invited guests to his house. We have no means of judging the value of St. John's story which puts Lazarus and Martha and Mary in this scene, representing them as intimate friends of Jesus. We can only surmise that a nucleus of disciples may have been formed in the town near which Jesus spent his nights.

This story is told in all of our Gospels, and the comparison of these four accounts illuminates only too searchingly the character of our evangelical tradition. That Matthew differs from Mark only in one detail proves only how faithfully he copied. Luke omits this story from his account of the last days in Jerusalem because he had told it before (Lk $7^{36-50}$), with variations, having doubtless found it in a tradition which associated it with Galilee. In that association the reference to Jesus' approaching death was, of course, not in place, and an entirely different point is given to the episode. According to Luke, the woman was a notorious sinner (presumably a harlot), and the scandal was that Jesus was not enough of a prophet to recognize intuitively that she was not the sort of a woman who ought to be permitted to touch him. She had ' wet his feet with her

tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the perfume.' This protest prompts Jesus to utter the parable of the two debtors, which he followed up with the sublime saying, 'Her sins, many as they may be, are forgiven, for she loved greatly; but he to whom little is forgiven loves little.' There is nothing more sublime in the Gospels, and I feel sure Jesus must have uttered these words to a sinner. We might be tempted to think (as Luke evidently did not) that this is a totally different story (in spite of many similarities), if the name of the host had not been mentioned, and proves to be Simon. The Fourth Gospel gets from Luke the anointing of the feet and the wiping (incongruously done after the anointing) with her hair, but he gets from Mark (or Matthew) the 300 denarii as an estimate of the value of the perfume, and the complaint (attributed to Judas) of the waste of so much money. St. John cannot repeat the saying, 'in anticipation she has perfumed my body for its burial,' because he places this supper 'six days before the Passover,' and also because he wants to represent that Jesus was properly embalmed before his burial. So he makes Jesus say, 'Let her keep it for the day of my burial.' Mary had a whole 'pound' of this perfume, and there would be enough left.

It may not be impossible to combine St. Luke's story with that told by St. Mark. A woman who had so much perfume in her possession was not likely to be respectable.

But what a disillusion we experience when we contemplate the divergencies of the Evangelists! The attempt to construct a life of Jesus out of all four Gospels, giving them all equal weight, is an act of credulity which is sure to be avenged by scepticism. But we are following St. Mark, right or wrong; and in this instance we can be sure that he is right. No one but Jesus could have conceived the saying, 'In anticipation she has perfumed my body for its burial.'

'An alabaster of perfume of pistic nard very costly'—that is a literal rendering of Mark's elegant phrase. But 'an alabaster' seems to mean a fine vase of any vitreous material, and 'pistic' merely means genuine; so I have

translated the phrase more soberly. This woman's wastefulness (extravagant love!) was shown not only by her pouring *all* of her perfume upon Jesus' head, but by breaking the precious vase which held it. I do not wonder that some protested. St. Matthew may be right in saying that it was 'the disciples.' Pious people have scant sense for beauty and prize chiefly '*good* works'—which commonly means something perfunctorily done for the relief of the poor. Jesus perceived in the 'waste' sheer beauty, and acclaimed it. We miss the point when we say in our familiar translations, 'she has done a good work.' *Kalon ergon* may on occasion be so translated; but *kalon* properly means *beautiful*, and that sense always clings to it. In this case we are compelled to translate by 'beautiful deed,' if we would not obscure the contrast which is plainly suggested. It was for good works the grumblers wanted to spend the sixty dollars, and Jesus reminds them that they always have opportunity for good works, having the poor always with them. But what this woman did was of a different character altogether. Good works are doubtless good, but it is clear that Jesus valued a beautiful deed more highly. By making this distinction we acquit Jesus of self-contradiction. Good works (almsgiving) had best be done so secretly that the left hand cannot discover what the right is doing (Mt 6[3]); for they are not always pretty, and we (like the pious people Jesus saw dropping their money into the treasury) rarely do them gracefully. Beautiful deeds, on the other hand, ought to be seen, so that by reason of their beauty 'men may glorify your Father in heaven' (Mt 5[16]). One must perceive that this last saying is inappropriately employed to encourage almsgiving in our Churches.

'But you will not always have *me*.' The commonplace but deplorable fact that we always have the poor with us suggests this abrupt transition to a more poignant theme. The thought of his approaching death was not absent from Jesus' mind during this cheerful banquet. We may be sure that he did not sit glumly apart; we have seen that he was not too austere to observe and remark upon beauty, and it seems likely that, but for this woman's intervention, he

would not have saddened his friends by introducing so sombre a topic, and one so little appropriate to after-dinner conversation. He spoke up in defence of the woman, whose beautiful deed, so far from being a sheer waste, was a very necessary and essential service to him. A beautiful deed is an uncalculating expression of love, yet it may turn out to be a good work. To do good to people is always lawful (p. 155), and the opportunities are only too frequent ; but an occasion for doing good to Jesus may not again present itself. This woman, without knowing it, had done the one necessary thing that remained to be done, in the only way that was humanly possible. Jesus speaks as though he knew that, in the hurry to get his body buried in the nearest tomb before the sun set and the Sabbath rest began, the pious and customary rites of washing and perfuming the body would be omitted. He seemed to know ($14^{27, 50}$) that there would be no Apostles to perform these last loving offices, even if time had not been lacking. Therefore he said, ' What lay in her power she has done : beforehand—in anticipation—she has perfumed my body for its burial.'

That is the parable of death which Jesus discovered in the supper at Bethany. Hardly any other could have served so well to express the imminence of his death. The odour of this perfume would still be clinging to his body when two days later it was laid in the tomb.

At the Last Supper Jesus discovered in the customary acts of breaking the bread and passing the cup a twin parable which represented his death as more instantly near. He speaks of it as though it had already occurred : ' This *is* my body . . . this *is* my blood.'

The Last Supper presents still another analogy with the supper at Bethany. The twin parable of the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup was destined (if not enjoined) to be repeated again and again ' in memory of ' Jesus : the perfuming of the body for its burial, though it was never again to be repeated, was to be talked about ' in memory of ' this woman, wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the whole world.

This is the only place, except in the title of our ' Gospels,'

where the word *Gospel* is used in the sense we commonly attach to it, as including pre-eminently the story of Jesus' beautiful deeds and words. If Jesus uttered these words, he betrays the presumptuous self-confidence that *he*—his person and the story of his words and deeds—will always be an essential part of the ' Gospel of God,' the good tidings from God and about God. He conceived that he was not merely ' a voice,' like John the Baptist, not a prophet only, but a doer of the work God had in hand for the salvation of ' many.' If he did not cherish this presumption, it is impossible to understand how he could face death so resolutely, or why he should bring upon himself at all the terrible death he might even then so easily have avoided by flight. Or else, as many people credulously suppose, he had in fact no presentiment of his doom, was expecting, perhaps, that on the festival the people would acclaim him as king ; that he celebrated (perhaps) in this banquet the political victory he confidently anticipated, proposed there (perhaps) a *Hoch!* to ' that Day,' *der Tag* of nationalistic triumph and revenge. Perhaps it was not until the last hour in Gethsemane that his vain self-confidence failed him, and he crumbled—showing himself not so great a man as you and I conceive ourselves to be.

We find it strange that the name of the woman who anointed Jesus (not for kingly glory but for his burial) is not mentioned by St. Mark, in spite of the recorded word that her deed will everywhere be talked about ' in memory of her.' We could better do without the name of Simon the leper. Perhaps Luke is right in representing that this woman was a sinner, and precisely the sort of sinner which would be least likely to find a welcome in a religious community. It is a fact that the disciples soon became *religious* after the departure of the ' Bridegroom.' They prayed and fasted and gave alms and called themselves saints. There was even a trace of puritanism in the early Christian community. Perhaps this woman did not want to be admitted into such a society. That would account for the fact that her name was not remembered. It would not be the only case of a name omitted from the Church roll which is surely written in the Lamb's book of life. But perhaps she was

not altogether forgotten. Perhaps St. John had good reason for calling her Mary. Perhaps she was that Mary who was called Magdalene, whom the Church instead of rejecting has always regarded as a saint (because seven devils had gone out of her). At such straws as this we sometimes have to clutch, on account of the imperfect transmission of the evangelical traditions. It seems like this woman that she should mark where they had laid the body she had anointed and should return as soon as the Sabbath was past to anoint it again (15[47], 16[1]).

¶ 90. Judas the Betrayer.

Mk 14[10, 11]. **And Judas the Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went away to the high priests to betray him to them. [11] And they were delighted when they heard it and promised to give him money. So he was watching for a good opportunity to betray him to them.**

It was probably not for artistic reasons only that Mark separates the story of Judas' visit to the high priests from his account of their perplexity, which was relieved by this unexpected betrayal. The 'and' which begins this paragraph I might translate by *then*, as Goodspeed and Moffatt do. For it seems to be Mark's purpose to represent that Judas 'went away to the high priests' immediately after the supper at Bethany. Upon such an errand he would naturally go by night. This suggests that something which occurred at the supper prompted him to such an act. Perhaps there was ground for St. John's statement that it was Judas who protested against the waste of so much costly perfume—'not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and because when he had charge of the purse he used to pilfer from it.' Avarice is the only ground the Gospels suggest for Judas' act. Matthew (26[15]) states that the high priests not only promised him money, but gave it to him then and there—'weighed out to him thirty silver pieces.' That statement is suspect because Matthew was only too evidently pleased at finding fulfilments of prophecy.

Anyway, the question of Judas' motive is complicated

by the fact that he repented when he saw that Jesus was condemned, and brought back to the high priests the money they had given him (Mt 27[3]). Matthew's story that he then went off at once and hung himself is corroborated (so far as the main point of it is concerned) by Luke in Acts 1[18, 19]. It is a fact that he did not appear as a public witness against Jesus. That may have been no part of his bargain with them. But their need of him was great, for no other witness could be found to testify that Jesus claimed to be the Christ; and it looks as if the star witness for the prosecution was absent because he had already put himself to death.

By hanging himself Judas gave conclusive proof of his repentance, and the phrase, 'when he saw that he was condemned,' has led some to conjecture that Judas intended only to force Jesus' hand, compelling him to acknowledge before the whole nation that he was the Christ—with the expectation, of course, that his claim would be credited. But we have no sufficient ground for such conjectures, and nothing short of absolute disloyalty can be made to agree with Jesus' condemnation, 'It would have been better for that man if he had never been born' (14[21]).

Far more important than the question *why* Judas resolved to betray Jesus is the question *what* he betrayed. It does not seem necessary that the Jewish authorities should have to employ one of Jesus' intimate disciples to disclose to them where Jesus was accustomed to pass the night (Jn 18[2]). Their secret police could easily have ascertained this, and in identifying Jesus in the dark Judas did not render an indispensable service. According to the prevalent view, there was nothing else for Judas to betray, for it is assumed that everybody knew of Jesus' claim to be the Christ. We have seen, however, that, outside of the Twelve, no one remotely suspected that Jesus cherished such a notion, and therefore we can understand that the disloyal disclosure of this secret (8[30]) was the substance of Judas' betrayal. The open part he took in Jesus' arrest, by leading the band of braves to Gethsemane and identifying Jesus is more remarked upon because it was more obvious. The disclosure of this secret served at least to justify the

authorities in arresting Jesus. It seems probable that they relied upon Judas to prove his guilt. But in spite of his absence all turned out well, for Jesus himself pleaded guilty.

¶ 91. Preparation for the Passover.

Mk 14[12–16]. **And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, the day when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make ready for you to eat the Passover supper?' [13] And he sent off two of his disciples, bidding them, 'Go into the city, and you will encounter a man carrying a water-jar: him you are to follow [14] into whatever house he enters, and say to the proprietor that the Teacher asks, "Where is my room where I may eat the Passover supper with my disciples?" [15] And he will show you a large room upstairs with couches spread, ready for use,—there you are to prepare the Passover for us.' [16] So his disciples departed and went into the city and found everything as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.**

We could not ask for a clearer indication than this of Mark's intention to represent that Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples the night before he was put to death. Matthew's account is not less clear, and Luke (22[15]) has the saying, 'I have longed exceedingly to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.' In short, this is the clear and concordant tradition of the earliest Gospels, and anyone who prefers the Johannine tradition that Jesus was dead and buried before the Passover must suppose that the Synoptic tradition was invented in order to exalt the Eucharistic sacrament by connecting it with the Passover. But, in fact, the early Church showed no interest in such an association, and we may reflect how unnatural it would be to refer to an annual festival as the analogue of a sacrament which was repeated weekly, if not daily. Even the annual festival of the Resurrection, though it was called the Passover, was felt to be a thing so different that the Church was scrupulous not to celebrate it on the day which the Jewish law prescribed. On the other hand, it is clear that St. John was enamoured of the idea that Jesus was the Paschal

Lamb—and that was motive enough for altering the earlier tradition so as to make out that Jesus was the Lamb of God and was crucified on the same day that the Passover lambs were slain (*cp.* Jn 19[36], 1[29]; Rev. 6[6], *etc.*). This symbolism was earlier than the Fourth Gospel. St. Paul says, 'Our Paschal Lamb has been sacrificed—that is, Christ' (1 Cor. 5[7, 8]). *That* he could say (as we do now) without implying that Jesus' death was strictly coincident in time with the Jewish sacrifice of the Passover. St. John betrays himself when he speaks of the 'sop' which Jesus dipped and gave to Judas (Jn 13[26]). That is evidently a reminiscence of the Synoptic saying (14[20]), 'One who is dipping his bread in the same bowl with me.' That, as we shall see in the next paragraph, is an incidental indication that we are dealing with the Passover ceremonial.

The intention of the Fourth Gospel is as unequivocal as that of the Synoptists, and therefore the two accounts cannot be combined. One may be inclined to prefer the account of the Fourth Gospel, but it is unhistorical to discard, in favour of that preference, the testimony of our historical Gospels, and the error appears grotesque when this initial prejudice requires the commentator to discredit, piece by piece, the whole of St. Mark's account of the last day before Jesus' death. I am thinking of no less celebrated an instance than Professor Wellhausen.

The story we are here dealing with may seem to be sufficiently discredited on other grounds. Though it is not strictly supernatural, and does not necessarily imply even a supernormal prevision on the part of Jesus, it plainly means to recount a very extraordinary coincidence between his expectation and the event. But need we remind ourselves again that Jesus was at the least a very extraordinary man? We ought not to be amazed at his serene confidence that God will provide. This story is almost a duplicate of Jesus' requisition of the ass for his approach to Jerusalem (11[1-7]). Here, again, he sends 'two' of his disciples on the errand. A less hopeful errand, it would seem; for after entering the city they are to follow the first man they see carrying a water-jar. Presumably he is a servant, and the possession of a man-servant implies a master of some

opulence. It might have been a shrewd guess that such an index would direct the disciples to a house ample enough to accommodate them all; but it was risky to count upon the proprietor to yield at demand a room he had prepared for his own use. Not too risky, however, as the event proved. For Jesus was now known to everyone in Jerusalem as a figure of extraordinary interest. On this occasion he did not have to say in mystic phrase, 'The *Lord* has need of it.' He could speak of himself as '*the* Teacher' and be sure that anyone would understand who was meant. (If Jesus spoke of himself as the Teacher, we cannot wonder that his disciples still addressed him by that title.) His question was peremptory, 'Where is *my* room?'

If Jesus had been lodging in a house at Bethany, the disciples would hardly have inquired where they were to prepare the Passover. It would be natural for them to eat the Passover in the house where they were lodging. But around the camp fire such a ceremony could not be performed, with its precise prescription of the attitude to be observed and the way the table was to be spread and lighted. The question, 'Where?' was therefore a natural one, and we cannot be surprised that Jesus preferred to eat his last Passover in the Holy City.

¶ 92. The Last Supper.

Mk 14[17–21]. **And when it was evening he came with the Twelve.** [18] **And as they were at table eating Jesus said, '*Amen* I say to you, one of you will betray me,—one who is eating with me.'** [19] **They were distressed at this, and one by one they ventured to say to him, 'Surely not I?' and, another, 'Surely not I?'** [20] **But Jesus said to them 'One of the Twelve who is dipping his bread in the same bowl with me.** [21] **The Son of Man indeed goes away, as the Scripture prescribes for him, but alas for the man by whom he is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born.'**

The Evangelist has told us that this was the Passover supper, and we can perceive here a reference to a characteristic ceremonial, the *charoseth*, which consisted in

' dipping ' bits of the unleavened bread with bitter herbs into a common dish which contained a peculiar sauce. But this is only an incidental reference to the Passover ritual—and it is the only reference we have to it, except that the use of wine implies a banquet of more than ordinary solemnity. It is evident that the Evangelist, though he represents Jesus as eating the Passover on the night before he was betrayed, lays no stress upon the fact that it was the Passover and finds in the symbolism of this festival no illumination for the Christian doctrine about Christ. If he had been an inventive mythologist, he might easily have made Jesus say that *he* was the reality which the Paschal lamb had so long symbolized. It is indeed surprising that he makes no reference to the Passover ceremony, leaving us to learn from Jewish sources what was done at the Last Supper. Though Mark was a born Jew, all that ceremonial had no longer any significance for him. The only thing he remarks upon is Jesus' prediction that one of the Twelve would betray him. That supper was significant to him chiefly as the Last Supper, and betrayal by one of his table companions would have seemed no less flagrant an act of disloyalty if it had been predicted at any other meal. Luke discards Mark's single reference to a ceremony of the Passover, thinking that it was a Jewish custom which Gentiles would not understand, and he describes the betrayer as one ' whose hand is with me on the table ' (Lk 22[21]).

The effect of this startling prediction is vividly described. The disciples were both hurt and disturbed. Each in turn ventured to ask, ' Surely it is not I ? ' That is half assertion and half question—a wavering affirmation. There are so many ways of betraying Jesus. Surely it is not I ? . . . and yet ?

Matthew (26[25]) makes Jesus reply only to Judas' question with ' Thou sayest it '—which must have revealed to all the Apostles who the betrayer was. And yet Judas did not immediately leave the company, his companions showed no rage against him, and did nothing to hinder his design. This is proof enough that no such indication of the betrayer was given. The Fourth Gospel is a little more discreet, representing that this was a secret breathed only to ' the

disciple whom Jesus loved,' though it is implied that by him it was imparted to Simon Peter, and we are at a loss to understand why it was not at once made known to all (Jn $13^{25, 26}$).

Though St. Mark's narrative does not contain in itself the pledge of infallible authenticity, it is relatively so superior to the other accounts that this comparison is apt to prompt, if not a logical, yet a sure (a psychological) conviction of its substantial accuracy.

St. John ($13^{30}$) very plausibly reports that Judas, immediately after his detection, left the room and betook himself to the high priests (we are to suppose). It is strange that the Synoptists give us no hint when Judas went off on his errand. We can imagine that he could not have left the room before the others without creating suspicion. Also that he would not wish to leave the company till he had made sure that they were on their way to the accustomed place. Without being missed, he could separate himself from the party while they were passing through the dark streets of the city. That was, in fact, the most propitious moment for the last act of his betrayal.

How did Jesus know that Judas was about to betray him? We have again forgotten, perhaps, that we are dealing with an extraordinary man! Second sight is nothing very extraordinary, and mind-reading is commoner still. If the possession of such faculties as these is any glory to Jesus, I would not dissuade anyone from ascribing them to him. And yet I feel bound to point out that this prediction is not a clear case of foreknowledge absolute. There are many grades of presentiment, presage, prescience, prevision, prognostic. All of them are human, and many of them are common. More or less clearly, they all rely upon visible signs. In this instance Judas may well have betrayed himself to so skilful a physiognomist as Jesus. And Jesus was not so much foretelling what was about to come to pass as descrying what already was. For Judas had already accomplished the most substantial part of his betrayal.

¶ 93. The Sacrament.

Mk $14^{22-25}$. **And as they were eating Jesus took a loaf, and after the blessing he broke it and gave it to them and said, 'Take it,—this is my body.' [23] And taking the cup, he handed it to them, after he had given thanks, and they all drank of it. [24] And he said to them, 'This is my blood of the Covenant, which is shed for many. [25] *Amen* I say to you, I shall not again drink of the fruit of the vine until that Day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God.'**

The importance of this passage is so disproportionate to its length that no one will expect our comment to be brief. It must not, however, exceed the limits to which the text itself can be stretched. A discussion of the ecclesiastical doctrine and celebration of the Eucharist would not be in place here. That is a different story, and elsewhere I have written a good deal about the Liturgy. Here we have no other aim but to discover what Jesus actually said and did at the conclusion of the last meal he shared with his disciples, and what he meant them to understand. This question we shall be able to consider, if not quite dispassionately, yet with a certain measure of detachment from the many and bitter controversies which concern the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Eucharist and the mode of its celebration.

We are justified in attaching great weight to this brief passage. Not only can we trust its affirmations, but we may find significance even in its omissions. For the general presumption that the Gospel of St. Mark is the earliest and most reliable we have is nowhere else more clearly justified by internal evidence. Even St. Paul's account (1 Cor. $11^{23-25}$), though it was written earlier, is not so primitive, being coloured unconsciously by the aim of providing a norm for the ecclesiastical celebration of the Eucharist. If St. Mark's astonishing brevity in relating a story of such immense interest to us suggests a suspicion that he has not told it all, we may reflect that the other Evangelists and St. Paul, though they mention some other details, or say the same things differently, do not in effect tell us more.

We must remember that St. Mark is not telling about the Eucharistic celebration as he was familiar with it in the Church, but solely about the act and word of Jesus which were commemorated in this celebration; and we can well believe that both act and word were so simple that they could be completely reported in this brief text. In fact, the action itself was so expressive that it required but two words to illuminate it fully. In all the accounts Jesus illuminates his gesture by a pair of parables—which is just what we would expect of him. In none of the accounts is the symbolism of the Passover meal exploited for illuminating the significance of the Eucharist. The idea of sacrifice is implied in Jesus' action and clearly enough expressed by his word, but the near-lying reference to the Paschal lamb is not exploited. We can well believe that Jesus regarded his death as a sacrifice *sui generis*, so essentially unique that its significance would be obscured rather than clarified by the symbolical *schema* of type and antitype.

If we accept St. Mark's account as the most primitive we possess, we have to attach great weight to the three singularities which chiefly distinguish it from the others. The first (which is shared by St. Matthew) is the omission of any reference to the Lord's injunction to repeat this act in remembrance of him. Another (in which St. Matthew again follows) is the use of the phrase 'for many,' instead of 'for you.' The third (in which Mark is unique) is the information—astonishing to us, but by no means incredible—that Jesus did not explain to his disciples the significance of the Cup till *after* they had drunk of it. However we ultimately judge them, whether as true or false, these three outstanding peculiarities of St. Mark's account have the appearance of being more primitive, chiefly because they are at variance with the ecclesiastical practice and therefore would not have been invented at a later time.

The two most important of these peculiarities we must consider seriously in another connection, but the first, being a point which can give us no great concern, we can dispose of briefly here. We may reflect that Jesus, though he may have expected his disciples to remember him by the repetition of these acts, did not need to impose as a

duty what inevitably must follow as a consequence. It was inevitable that the disciples must continue to share with one another the daily meal, and it is inconceivable that they could fail to remember Jesus in the concomitant circumstance of breaking the loaf, which he had often performed in a way which was somehow characteristic and memorable, and to which at the Last Supper he had attached a new and solemn significance, so that it became a reminder, not only of the many meals they had shared with him, but chiefly of the last, a memorial not so much of his life as of his death. On the other hand, it was natural, if not inevitable, that the early Church should conceive that a rite which Jesus himself had performed and his disciples were diligent to observe must have been expressly prescribed by him. We may recall here what was said (pp. 274 ff.) about the supper by the lake shore as an antecedent of the Eucharistic Sacrament.

Incidentally we may remark that 'the breaking of bread,' though it is an expression which was never used in the Church except with reference to the Eucharist, does not necessarily involve the drinking of wine—especially where it is described as the daily practice (Acts 2[42, 46]) of people who were not accustomed to live sumptuously every day. Among the Jews of that time and place wine was not an ordinary accompaniment of the common meal. Apart from a religious solemnity like the Passover, it was associated especially with marriage feasts and with such splendid banquets as rich tax-gatherers offered to Jesus in Galilee (Mt 11[19]). Symbolically considered, bread and water, the substantial constituents of the common meal, would by themselves express sufficiently well the solidarity of the disciples with one another, and (what was far more important) with the risen Lord. That also would suffice for a sacrament. The sacrament at Bethsaida, with which Jesus assured himself that the multitude of his followers here would be his guest-friends in the coming Kingdom, consisted, in fact, only of bread and two smoked fish. St. Paul (Acts 27[25]) presents us with an example of celebration (not communion merely) in one kind. The circumstance of impending shipwreck was of course extraordinary, but

nothing in the account suggests that this might not be an ordinary practice. In 1 Cor. $11^{27}$ St. Paul speaks of eating the bread *or* drinking the cup. The very Protestant authors of our Authorized Version felt that the 'or' was a dangerous concession to Rome and so replaced it with an *and*. Perhaps they obscured a more significant trait than they suspected. St. Paul's expression with regard to the cup, 'as often as you drink it,' seems to imply not only that they would never drink wine without remembering, but also that the drinking of wine might not be so common as the breaking of bread. In these reflections we may find, perhaps, some support for a conjecture of Adolf Harnack's, founded on a phrase of Justin Martyr's, that even in the second century it was not unusual to celebrate the Eucharist with bread and water.

The element which wine added to the Last Supper—and to the Eucharist—was both symbolical and sacramental. It expressed more clearly than the broken loaf the idea of sacrifice—life poured out and appropriated; and it could be regarded as a foretaste (hence a surer pledge) of participation in the celestial banquet ($14^{25}$).

But every common meal can be regarded as a symbol of solidarity, as a pledge of loyalty. 'Eating with me,' and 'dipping in the same dish,' is an expression of this thought which we encountered in the preceding paragraph—hands on the same table, is Luke's rendering of it. And that is a thought which is as prominent in the Sacrament as in the Supper. St. Paul gives expression to it when he says (1 Cor. $10^{17}$), 'We who are many are one loaf, one body, for we all partake of the same loaf.' It represents a sentiment which was very essential to the Eucharist in the early Church; and the Reformers did their utmost to revive it, even at the expense of making the celebration infrequent. The association of Judas' betrayal with the Last Supper makes his disloyalty appear the more heinous, and the fact that the traitor also received the Sacrament shows that it is not an infallible pledge of salvation. It is a pledge conditioned upon loyalty.

So far as these ideas are concerned, any common meal would serve as a symbol for them. According to a notion

which is very characteristic of the New Testament, men who are in communion with one another are under obligation to ' communicate ' to one another what they severally possess. But the Eucharist is coloured essentially by a different thought, namely, that all severally ' communicate ' in something they none of them do properly possess —that is, in Jesus Christ and the benefits he has procured for them. That is what Jesus intimated at the conclusion of the Last Supper—in words so strong and striking that the Church could not fail in the long run to recognize in this the principal value of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. From St. Paul's reproaches in 1 Cor. 11 we gather that some were disposed to regard the Supper chiefly or solely as a symbol of solidarity, not distinguishing the element Jesus had added to that common conception, namely ' the Body.' But never *again* do we hear of Christians who would not answer in the affirmative St. Paul's rhetorical question, ' The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ ? ' The danger has rather been that men are inclined to take too literally words which Jesus evidently uttered as parables.

They were parables acted as well as spoken : the broken loaf—my body ; the wine poured out—my blood. When once the sacramental character of the Supper is assured (independently of these words), and when the sacrificial character of Jesus' death is discovered, both in his word and action, it cannot be thought that all is lost if we speak of these words and acts as a parable. As a parable, they first of all intimated how near was his death—exactly as did the anointing at Bethany when he had interpreted it as a preparation for his burial. But even as a parable, these words and acts also intimated that his death was not in vain, that it was in some unique sense a sacrifice, ' blood of the Covenant, shed for many.' But these words demand separate consideration, and before we can go any further we must attend to a pervading trait in this text which I have intentionally overlooked at the beginning of this comment.

For some time past it has not seemed necessary to call the reader's attention to all the eschatological traits which appear in the passages we are studying. This element we have learned to expect as a matter of course, and it is the key which has opened to us an understanding of the obscurest problems which emerge in the story of these last days at Jerusalem. Now, however, we must note expressly how predominant is the eschatological tone in St. Mark's account of this Sacrament. To appreciate it more fully we may recur to the preceding paragraph, the account of the Last Supper. There, too, the eschatological tone prevails. That is the more remarkable because the Passover was expressly and exclusively a memorial of an event long past, every detail of its ritual being designed to fix attention upon the first act of Israel's history as a nation, the deliverance of the people from the bondage of Egypt. That accounts, perhaps, for the fact that the Gospel narrative pays such slight attention to the Passover supper as such. For Jesus' face was set in another direction, and it was towards the future he would orient his disciples' thoughts. In the account of the Passover supper, therefore, we find no reference to Moses and the ancient history of Israel. Instead, there looms up prominently the Son of Man, that being the futuristic, eschatological title for the Messiah. Beyond this present world our thoughts are forcibly projected when Jesus says of this Son of Man that he 'goes away' as the Scripture prescribes. There is an eschatological implication also in the doom pronounced upon the betrayer—'that he might go to his own place,' is the phrase used in Acts $1^{25}$.

This prepares us for the strongly eschatological tone of the passage we are now studying. Luke very plausibly reports a saying which serves as a transition from the Passover supper to the Sacrament. Jesus explains his earnest desire to share this Passover with his disciples by saying, 'For I will never eat the Passover again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God' (Lk $22^{16}$). That word 'fulfilled' makes even the Passover an eschatological type, testifying to a future deliverance immeasurably greater than the deliverance from Egypt. Moreover, by mentioning a

first cup (which was presumably within the Passover ritual) and attaching to it the strong eschatological reference which Mark associates with the one cup of the Sacrament, Luke combines very closely the Supper and the Sacrament. St. Mark's phrase (only slightly altered by St. Luke) stamps this Sacrament with the character of an eschatological pledge : '*Amen* I say to you, I shall not again drink of the fruit of the vine until that Day when I drink it *new* in the Kingdom of God.' That implies the promise that those who are drinking with him here will drink with him there. That implication is expressed by St. Matthew (26[29])—'That day when I drink it new *with you*.' In both these texts the word 'new' is important. It does not mean wine so recently made that it is still unfit to drink. It is an eschatological word. Even the wine partakes of the *newness* which will characterize the new heaven and the new earth. This explains to us how Jesus could speak of eating and drinking in the kingdom of God without conceiving grossly of the resurrection (*cp.* 12[25]). 'That Day' is another distinctly eschatological term. It does not contemplate an indefinite day in the future, but the expected Day of the Lord. And *now* Jesus does not regard it on the side which is turned towards us—the side which threatens judgment and exacts repentance—but on the side which is now turned away from us, the bright side which will not be visible till *after* the birth-pangs and the regeneration.

In view of the decisively eschatological orientation of the Sacrament we can understand why Jesus did not speak of it as a retrospective memorial of him—although it was bound to have that significance eventually. St. Paul, though he laid stress upon the memorial character of the rite, did not slight the futuristic implications of the Sacrament : 'Every time you eat this loaf and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death—*until he comes back*' (1 Cor. 11[26]). Even this *proclaiming* of the Lord's death is not wholly retrospective : it is an instance of the actual proclamation of the Gospel with a view to a future salvation. That is the sense in which the bread and the wine—Jesus' body and blood—are broken and poured and given and taken and eaten 'in remembrance of' him.

In our English Liturgy we have only one vestige left —the negligible and neglected phrase, ' until his coming again '—to remind us of the original orientation of this Sacrament. And in America our bishops lately rejected the proposal to restore the *Benedictus qui venit*, for fear it might sanction the belief that Christ is really present in the Sacrament—and it never entered into anybody's head that originally this was an expression of an eschatological hope. So far have we wandered from the original intention of this Sacrament that the earliest liturgy we possess (that of the *Didache*) seems suspicious to us because it is altogether and utterly eschatological. Not only does it terminate with the note of *Maranatha* (the Lord cometh !), but it interprets the one loaf as a symbol of eschatological solidarity. ' Even as this broken loaf [*i.e.* the grains of wheat which enter into its composition] was scattered over the hills and was gathered together and became one, so may thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom.'

It is because of our prejudices I am obliged to make so long a comment upon this brief passage. For unless we think eschatologically, we cannot justly interpret this sacrament. We are obliged to regard it either as a mere pictorial symbol (a sign language eked out by figurative words), or else as the realization of the thing signified, the present and actual possession of all that is promised. In either case we overthrow the nature of a sacrament. We are content to *have* our reward now.

Unless we think eschatologically, we cannot appreciate the significance of one of the peculiar traits in St. Mark's account which, in smaller compass, expresses the same thought as the passage from ' The Teaching of the Apostles ' (*Didache*) which I have just quoted. ' For *many* '—if it has any significance at all as distinguished from the ' for you ' of Paul and Luke—is an eschatological word. The Supper *was* a pledge to those who partook of it in company with Jesus—and, of course, to them only. But the death of Jesus was not for them alone, but ' for many '—the indefinite many of God's election, the many who would be gathered from the ends of the earth into God's Kingdom.

We are obliged to accept this word as genuine because we can conceive of no motive which could have led anyone to insert it here in place of the familiar ' for you ' of the Liturgy. And if we accept it, we are obliged to connect it with the previous instance of its use ($10^{45}$), when Jesus said, ' The Son of Man has come to give his life a ransom for many.' Referring to p. 411, I can spare the reader a repetition of our previous discussion of the significance of this word. Obviously we must apply to this second passage what we learned in the first. The word ' ransom,' as expressing the broadest idea of sacrifice, is silently included in the saying, ' My blood of the Covenant, which is shed for many.' We have therefore no reason to suspect that ' shed ' was not an original word, or that Matthew wrongly interprets its sacrificial implication when he adds, ' for the remission of sins '—or that Jesus did not conceive that the *breaking* of the loaf and the *pouring out* of the wine were significant symbols of his sacrificial death. If Jesus did not have that comfort at his last supper, he could not have applied to himself the whole of that passage of Isaiah in which he discovered the word ' many ' : ' By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many. He shall see the fruit of his soul's travail and be satisfied.'

I have reserved for the last place a consideration of the most marked peculiarity of St. Mark's account—which, however, had never seriously been remarked upon until Albert Schweitzer dealt with it in *Das Abendmahl* (the little book in which he hid his ' Sketch of the Life of Jesus,' which I translated under the title of *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*). St. Mark represents that the disciples had drunk of the cup *before* Jesus disclosed to them its special significance : ' This is my blood of the Covenant, which is shed for many.' That is obviously one of the most primitive traits in St. Mark's Gospel. It stands opposed to the liturgical practice of the Church, and therefore all our other authorities have corrected it. But it is in entire agreement with Jesus' notion of a sacrament as something done to a man (*ex opere operato*), which need not be adequately understood in order to be effective. It is like the supper by the lake shore, his farewell to the multitude of Galilean

disciples, which Jesus regarded as a sacrament, but did not take pains to explain to anybody. The Last Supper at Jerusalem was his solemn farewell to the small band of intimate disciples. That too was a sacrament, and the Apostles, because they knew that Jesus was the Christ, could in some sort understand—or would after the Resurrection be able to comprehend—that it was a solemn pledge of uninterrupted solidarity with him. But the special significance which Jesus attached to it they could not have understood had he not disclosed it to them—that it was a participation in him and in the benefits which accrued from his death. *That* he disclosed to them tardily, after the supper, and with the briefest words which have ever been used to signify so much. Of the bread he said as he distributed it, ' This is my body ' ; and of the cup, after they had drunk of it, ' This is my blood of the Covenant.'

After they had all drunk of the wine it was too late, one must think, to consecrate it. Therefore : either the first Eucharist was not properly consecrated ; or else the solemn words, ' This is my blood ' (also by parity of reasoning, ' This is my body ') are not necessary for consecration. Such is the astonishing consequence we must draw from this remarkable but unremarked peculiarity of St. Mark's account. Yet we ought not to be astonished at this when we think of the Eucharistic prayers of the *Didache* and remember that Jesus consecrated the sacrament of farewell on the lake shore with the same prayer he used here—the common thanksgiving at meals. I can refer to pp. 276 f. for an explanation of the terms ' to bless ' and ' to give thanks ' (*eulogein* and *eucharistein*). Both of them are used in this passage, and both have the same meaning. It is the latter word which gives the Eucharist its name. It is the thanksgiving which ' eucharisticizes ' the bread and the wine.

It is natural and proper that in our Eucharistic prayer we should preserve the memory (*anamnesis*) of Jesus' words, ' My body . . . my blood ' ; but if the sacrament were made valid only by the exact repetition of the words which Jesus actually uttered, we should be in distress to decide between Mark and Paul. So scrupulous as that the Church has

never been. It has followed Paul, however; and Paul, I suppose, represents the earliest ecclesiastical use—except, perhaps, when he speaks of the Covenant as 'New.' Luke follows him in this, but Matthew follows Mark in using the word Covenant simply—and that seems to be more primitive. 'New Covenant' betrays reflection. At any rate, the word clearly refers to Exodus 24[8]—and therefore, if we accept it as genuine at all, has clearly a sacrificial implication.

There is danger that a text so short as this may be more obscured than illuminated by so long a comment. All the more because the exigencies of argument have obliged us to separate things which properly belong together, and in some cases to invert the natural order. Now that this work has been done, a brief recapitulation may serve to unite these broken lights and illuminate the situation as a whole.

The disciples expected, as a matter of course, that Jesus would eat the Passover supper with them. That was ostensibly the prime object of their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Jesus gave orders that the supper should be celebrated in Jerusalem and with dignity, in the upper room which was providentially provided. But for him this meant a solemnity far more august than the Passover. It was to be his last meal with his disciples; it was, in fact, the last occasion he had for conversing with them, except for the few words he addressed to Peter afterwards. And having eaten so often with them, he meant to make this supper both a gesture of farewell and a pledge that they would be united with him again in the Kingdom of God—just as he had done for the multitude when he was leaving Galilee.

The Passover supper, more solemnly than other meals, expressed the solidarity of the disciples as a family group and pledged their loyalty to him as their chief. In strident discord with this presumption, Jesus announced that one of those who were eating with him was about to betray him. That threw them all into consternation, for not one of them felt secure of his own rectitude. Peter was about to deny him, and that very night *all* forsook him and fled. Nevertheless, he did not count that this all-too-human weakness

dissolved the bond which united them to him or invalidated the sacramental pledge of their reunion. Only the son of perdition, whose sin was not a weakness of the flesh but a perversity of the spirit, went to his own place.

'The Son of Man goes away, as the Scripture prescribes for him.' That is the first intimation that this is a farewell supper—unless we may trust St. Luke's plausible report that Jesus had said already at the beginning of the supper (in terms, however, which did not suggest an immediate departure), 'I shall not again eat the Passover until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.' Only St. John ($13^{21}$) represents that Jesus was 'troubled in spirit' when he spoke of his betrayal. From the other accounts it would seem that he gave utterance to this presage and to the clearer predictions of his death as serenely as he spoke the night before of the anointing as a preparation for his burial.

Only when the Passover supper was finished did Jesus disclose the deeper significance of this farewell sacrament. It meant to him more than a symbol of solidarity, more even than a sacramental pledge that the disciples would eat with him again in the Kingdom of God. At last it is clear to Jesus that he is to die alone, that all the men of violence who presumed to take the Kingdom by storm were not equal to the task, and that he alone must win the Kingdom for his followers. Hence he has nothing more to say about living dangerously. 'Be watchful, and pray that you may not be brought into temptation,' is now the form of his eschatological precept. For his weak disciples, as for the little children, there is nothing left but to *receive* the Kingdom of God, if they are to enter it at all. Jesus wins it for them by his death; so *now*, more emphatically than ever before, he puts *himself* in the centre—and, more particularly, himself as dying for their sake. How often he had broken the loaf to distribute it to his companions! Even in this supper he had already broken the wafer of unleavened bread as a part of the Passover ritual. The fact that this commonplace act was remarked upon at the supper by the lake shore suggests that Jesus was accustomed to break the loaf and say the blessing with a solemnity which made it notable. And after the supper, when no

one was expecting to eat or drink any more, the attention of all must have been fixed upon him when he took another wafer and said an additional blessing, and broke it and gave it to them. When he added, ' This is my body,' the significance of the acted parable was clear. For the first time the act of *breaking* the bread became significant. His death was so near that he could speak of it as though it were already accomplished. Then he took the cup, said again the thanksgiving over it, and gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And only then—tardily, and as if he were reluctant to say so much—he interpreted that parable: ' My blood ' So far it was only a more striking symbol than the broken loaf, vividly representing blood shed, life poured out. But there was more than this to be said about it. It was ' blood of the Covenant '—mysteriously required by a divine dispensation. But at any rate, not in vain, but for his friends. And not for them only, but ' for many.' He could not say for the whole of Israel, for there were the Pharisees and the high priests—and there was Judas *present* as an example of the Israel which was not the Israel of God. And he would not say that it was for the elect of Israel alone, but for all whom God might call from the east and from the west to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the celestial banquet. At that moment at least he could see, or foresee, the fruit of his soul's travail, and was satisfied.

When the Apostles were gathered together again after the Resurrection, they could not but remember Jesus especially by this last and most solemn act. And whether or not Jesus had commanded them to repeat this act in memory of him, it could not but be observed forever as his memorial, and it could not fail to be regarded forever as a sacrament.

And even if men continue to differ forever about the exact significance of Jesus' words, it seems as if we might all agree in our deportment when we repeat this sacramental memorial. We cannot celebrate it with too much solemnity. We might generously vie with one another in expressing our reverence. None of the ' gay religions full of pomp and gold ' excel the simple and austere solemnity of this

sacrament. Nor can I bear that any should excel me in reverence for it. Living in Rome and seeing men fall upon their knees at the words *Hoc est corpus meum,* I rejoice that my Liturgy permits, indeed inwardly compels me to kneel when I say, ' Do this in remembrance of me.' ' In remembrance ! ' That means a compendium of this whole Gospel we are studying.

## Section 12. ¶¶ 94–97.

## GETHSEMANE

### Mk 14[26–52]

¶ 94. Deserters.

Mk 14[26–31]. **And after singing the hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives, [27] and Jesus said to them, ' You are all going to fall ; for it is written, " I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter." [28] But after I am raised up I will go before you to Galilee.' [29] But Peter said to him, ' Even if all the others fall, surely not I.' [30] And Jesus said to him, *Amen* I say to you, that you, to-day, this very night before the cock crows twice, will three times disown me.' [31] But he continued to assert vehemently, ' Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And so they all said.**

At the Passover supper the ' Hallel ' was sung. It consisted of Psalms 115–118. We must suppose that Psalm 118 was sung at the conclusion of the ceremony. It is a moving experience for us to read this Psalm with the reflection that Jesus sang it with his disciples before leaving the Upper Room. It is amazing that he had the heart to sing such a hymn—not a *De profundis,* but a song of praise :

> O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good :
> For his mercy endureth for ever.

At that moment ! After the prognostication of Judas' betrayal ! When he had just demonstrated by such clear parables his approaching death ! and when he was about to foretell the fall of all his Apostles ! Yet we can partly

understand how he could sing this hymn with fervour, even with exultation :

> The Lord is on my side, I will not fear :
> What can man do unto me.
> The Lord is my strength and song :
> And he has become my salvation.
> I shall not die but live :
> And declare the works of the Lord.
> The Lord hath chastened me sore :
> But he hath not given me over unto death.
> Open me the gates of righteousness :
> I will enter into them, I will give thanks unto the Lord.
> The stone which the builders rejected
> Is become the head of the corner.
> This is the Lord's doing :
> It is marvellous in our eyes.
> Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
> Thou art *my* God and I will give thanks unto thee :
> Thou art *my* God and I will exalt thee.
> O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good :
> For his mercy endureth for ever.

St. Mark seems to mean that the next saying Jesus addressed to his Apostles (which was also the last he was to address to them collectively) was uttered either as they were leaving the room or else while they were on their way to the Mount of Olives, for not till the next paragraph does he bring the party to Gethsemane. Luke clearly wishes to represent that the prediction of Peter's denial occurred in the Upper Room (Lk $22^{31-39}$).

Matthew alone follows Mark in reporting that Jesus predicted the defection of *all* his Apostles. Here, if ever, he had good reason for being ' troubled in spirit.' This recalls the prediction that *one* of them was to betray him, and the anxious incredulity of the disciples, ' Surely not I ? ' A deserter is not so bad as a betrayer, but that *all* would desert him might seem more grievous than that one should betray. Twelve valiant saints who were presumptuous enough to think that they could climb the steep ascent of heaven and take the Kingdom of God by storm were about to stumble and fall as soon as the way became steep. That might have been enough to discourage Jesus, even to embitter him, yet he predicts it with entire serenity. Foreseeing the event

(14[50]), he perceived that it was in agreement with a passage of Scripture (Zech. 13[7]),—which he rendered in a way which suited the occasion more aptly than the exact words of the prophet. The shepherd struck down—the sheep scattered. That is the correspondence fundamental both to the saying of Zechariah and to the situation which confronted Jesus. It is a parable which would be illuminating to a pastoral people. I have taken the liberty of translating actively the verb 'shall be scattered.' No violence will avail to scatter sheep—but it is so like sheep to scatter when they no longer have a shepherd. The Apostles (these valiant saints!) were mere sheep—so human! On another occasion (Lk 15[3–7]) Jesus spoke with pathos of the one sheep which was lost, and made of it (as he did of the prodigal son) a parable of defection from God. But it was to save lost sheep (Mt 10[6]) he had come (6[34]), and that explains why there is no note of reprobation in the sad presage that all his Apostles would desert him and scatter like sheep. Even then he could have said—perhaps *only* then could he have been understood in saying it—'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom' (Lk 12[32]).

How punctually this promise was fulfilled St. Mark tells us a little later (14[50]).

But Jesus added yet another prophecy, the fulfilment of which St. Mark's Gospel (as we now have it) does not record; and without knowing how it was fulfilled we are in doubt how it was meant. 'But after I am raised up I will go before you to Galilee.' It is clear that this was meant as an encouraging prediction, for Jesus speaks with confidence of his Resurrection. But what was meant by *going before*? It is the word which was used in 10[32] to describe Jesus' lonely leadership of the band of pilgrims—he marched alone *at their head*. If we might take it in that sense here, it would mean that the risen Christ would put himself at the head of his band of Apostles and lead them back to Galilee. But why should he lead them back to Galilee when their field was the world? One objection to this prophecy is that it never was fulfilled. Moreover, it comports very ill with the notion of scattered sheep. How were they to be collected?—particularly if (as we may plausibly suppose) these Apostles

started that very night on their flight to Galilee, and with all the speed they could make would hardly arrive there before the day of the Resurrection. We have better ground for supposing that Jesus meant to say that he would be there before them and meet them in those familiar surroundings.

That is a prophecy which actually was fulfilled, according to the report of Matthew and John. It is true that these two Evangelists waver between two traditions which cannot plausibly be reconciled. On the one hand was the tradition that the Apostles never left Jerusalem and encountered *there* the risen Lord. That was a version more honourable to the Apostles—and very natural, too, because the Church commonly thought of the Apostles as they were gathered together again in Jerusalem not long after the Resurrection. Luke is perfectly consistent : he says nothing about scattered sheep, and represents that all the appearances of the risen Lord occurred on the first day of the week and at Jerusalem. John foretells that the Apostles will be scattered (16[32]), but he does not scatter them. One of them stands at the foot of the cross (19[26]), Peter and that ' other disciple ' were at the tomb early on the first day of the week and found it empty, at evening on that day all of them but Thomas were together in one room when the Lord appeared to them, and on the Sunday following Thomas was with them. But an appendix to St. John's Gospel (chapter 21) records the appearance of the Lord to a group of his Apostles in Galilee. It is a chapter which, notwithstanding it has been edited in the Johannine style, has a suggestion of concrete reality which is very foreign to this Gospel ; and (apart from the editorial comment which introduces and concludes it) it seems to recount the *first* appearance of the Lord. *This* would be an apt fulfilment of the prophecy we are considering, and in view of this we can translate the prophecy more exactly, ' I will *precede* you to Galilee.'

It has been suggested that this inconsistent appendix to St. John's Gospel would be a very consistent conclusion for the Gospel of St. Mark and perhaps (in a more original form), was actually the missing conclusion. It would be appropriate in that place, not only because it is a precise fulfilment of the prophecy that Jesus would precede his scattered sheep to

Galilee, but also because the prophecy uttered in the same breath about Peter's denial finds there an ideal conclusion in Peter's reinstatement and the presage of his heroic martyrdom. To the triple denial there corresponds the triple affirmation of his love which to his grievous humiliation he was required to make. Not only that, but the bitter is made sweet to this strayed sheep by the charge he is given to tend other sheep—to be a shepherd.

St. Matthew is the only Evangelist who makes an effort to harmonize these discordant traditions. Not only does he repeat the prophecy that the 'flock will be scattered' and that Jesus will 'precede them to Galilee' (Mt $26^{31, 32}$), but he puts this latter saying in the mouth of the angel at the tomb (Mt $28^{7}$)—twisting it, however, to mean that the Apostles (who were not scattered, but remained still in Jerusalem) were to return in a body to Galilee with the expectation of meeting Jesus on the mountain where he had appointed them (Mt $28^{10, 16}$).

The story of Peter's denial could not have been told with any grace by anybody but Peter himself. For the whole of it is highly disparaging to him—even the beginning of the story which we have now under consideration, namely, his presumptuous retort to Jesus' prediction that *all* were about to stumble and fall. It was characteristic of his egoism that he counted himself an exception to a prediction which included 'all,' that he relied upon his own strength rather than God's help (Lk $22^{31, 32}$), and that, protesting too much, he gave the lie to his Teacher. For this he brought upon himself a special condemnation. To Peter's emphatic 'ego' Jesus answers with an emphatic 'you'—'*You* will disown me.' Peter *is*, as he claims to be, an exception among the Apostles—he alone will disown Jesus, whereas the others do no more than desert him. It is thus Peter tells the story, without sparing himself. We, however, can reflect that he alone of the eleven deserters had the courage to linger for several hours in that dangerous neighbourhood, even venturing himself so far as the courtyard of the high priest's house, and so encountering a temptation which the others escaped by a hastier flight. In St. Mark's story Peter is the most vehement in affirming his loyalty, but all the rest join

in the chorus. Yet all proved to be deserters—as *we* all have been in a pinch, and of us more would be deniers if we had the courage.

¶ 95. Jesus' Prayer.

Mk 14$^{32-42}$. **And they came to a place the name of which was Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, 'Sit down here while I pray.' 33 And he took along with him Peter and James and John. And he began to be in dread and distress 34 and said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death. Stay here and watch.' 35 And he went on a little way and threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it is possible, the hour might pass him by. 36 'Abba, Father,' he said, 'all things are possible to Thee; let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt.' 37 Then he came and found them asleep, so he said to Peter, 'Simon, art thou sleeping? Couldest thou not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray that *you* may not come into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' 39 And going off again he prayed in the same words. 40 Then he returned and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and they were at a loss what to answer him. 41 And when he came the third time he said to them, 'Still sleeping? Still taking your rest? Enough of that! The hour has come! Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners! 42 Get up. Come along. Behold! my betrayer is near!'**

The orchard where Jesus was accustomed to spend his nights is now for the first time named, for it was made notable only by what occurred there this last night, as the scene of Jesus' agony and of his arrest. Gethsemane must be the place where Jesus ordinarily went, and where he was accustomed to spend the whole night, for otherwise Judas would not have been able to find him. And we are not to suppose that Jesus left eight of his disciples at Gethsemane and went on with three of them to another place, for the name was memorable only because it designated the place where Jesus prayed and where he was found by his betrayer. This passage confirms our assumption that Jesus and his disciples slept out of doors during their whole stay at

Jerusalem. For here Judas expected to find them late at night, and presumably counted upon finding them asleep, so that the arrest could be made without tumult. Moreover, the Apostles actually did sleep there this last night—doubtless not only the three who were told to keep watch—and we must recognize that these watchmen had some excuse for falling asleep. That is what they had come there for: this was the time and this also was the place for sleep—and custom is potent.

Jesus leaves the larger body of his disciples to sleep as they were accustomed to do in the orchard. (It appears that in the dark Judas' absence was not noticed by the sleepy disciples.) But he himself was not to sleep this night, and he went apart with the three who had always been his favourite disciples. One wonders that he could expect any comfort from their company when he knew that in an hour all would desert him. But they were all that he had. And, in fact, it was not their company he asked for, but their vigilance. It seems that he did not want to be surprised by the traitor and his band while he was prostrate on the ground in prayer. In spite of the negligence of his watchmen, he was alert at the last moment and advanced to meet his betrayer.

In studying the last few paragraphs we have been surprised, perhaps incredulous, that Jesus could speak so serenely of his approaching death and maintain so calm a demeanour. We are assured now that this appearance is not deceptive, that the Evangelist is not following a fictitious 'tendency,' for here he does not scruple to let us see how profoundly Jesus was shaken by his dreadful position. Here we can take the word 'began' quite literally; this is, at all events, the first intimation we have that Jesus felt the utmost dread and distress. He seems to find comfort in imparting his distress to the three intimate disciples. 'Even unto death' means that death itself would be preferable to this last hour of expectancy. Literally, it was a question of only an 'hour'—before the beginning of the end, before he should be deprived of his liberty and dragged ignominiously from stage to stage on the way to the Cross. One hour at the most was enough for Judas, after deserting his companions in the dark streets of Jerusalem, to find his way to the high

priest's house, summon the guard and lead them to Gethsemane. Therefore Jesus was not speaking figuratively when he prayed that 'the hour' might pass him by, and he had in mind no vague term of duration when he said to Peter, 'Could you not watch one hour?'

It was an hour of dreadful suspense, but also of dreadful temptation. For he had it in his power to escape, so long as that 'hour' lasted—and never again. Being on the Mount of Olives, he was already on the road to Galilee—how easy to follow it, with the full moon of the Passover night! What a temptation! For 'the flesh is weak'—even Jesus' flesh! Humanity is always human. *His* spirit was prompt and ready, but his soul was exceeding sorrowful, and his soulish flesh was weak like ours. Spirit is always 'ready' (wherever it is manifest at all), but the flesh is always weak. The painful expectancy of this hour might suffice to make it harder than death, but besides that there was the sharp conflict between flesh and spirit, the temptation of the still open possibility of escape.

We can perceive that the words Jesus addressed to the disciples reflected his own experience. The prayer which he made was substantially the same as that which he commended to them, 'Pray that *you* may not come into temptation.' What assurance was there that they had sufficient 'spirit' to overcome their 'flesh'? In any case, their temptation was to be a sharp one. It might lead not only to desertion, not only to denial of their Teacher, but to irremediable apostacy—to hatred of this man who had so wooed them away from this world that they could never again be contented with it, who had nourished in them fancy hopes of Eternal Life, and himself was about to be dragged away to an ignominious death. He had brought them to the pass where they must say, 'If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most pitiable.' Evidently, their temptation might lead to something worse than the cowardice of flight. Yet Jesus was confident—not in their power to resist temptation, but in the power of God. Therefore he besought them to pray, as he himself did.

Jesus greatly needed comfort in that hour, but he did not seek it in human companionship—he turned to his Father.

'*Abba*,' he said—the word 'Father' is added for our information, to explain the meaning of the Aramaic word Jesus used with such significance that the very syllables were memorable. He did not need to say 'Father in heaven,' as St. Matthew does in the *Pater noster* to interpret to *us* the 'distance' implied in that term of address. *We* need that admonition, but Jesus uttered the word 'Father' in a way which expressed a sense of infinite distance. The distance of the Son from his heavenly Father was not the grim separation we have constituted by our sin: he did not have to approach God with the confession, 'I am no more worthy to be called thy son.' But in every other respect the distance of the incarnate Son was our distance, the distance between humanity and God. Therefore Jesus did not 'commune' with God (as if God were within him!), he did not talk with God (as the Fourth Gospel represents)—he *prayed*. The divine Son, having become man, stood in a *religious* relation to the Father. And how religious was his demeanour! He prostrated himself, face to the ground, 'before the great world-altar stairs which slope through darkness up to God.' And yet he dared to say, 'Abba.' To this terrible, this inscrutable God who had brought him to this hour of agony! We in our day are so familiar with God, have so lost the sense of distance, that the ancient liturgies seem to us abject when they introduce the *Pater noster* with the encouragement, 'As our Saviour Christ hath taught us, let us dare to say, *Our Father*.'

We are not to suppose that Jesus rolled upon the ground in an uncontrolled agony of apprehension. When he 'threw himself on the ground' it was in the attitude of awful reverence. And how well his supplication agreed with that! He held fast to his faith that to God all things are possible (10[27])—why, then, might he not be spared 'this cup'? How human! How religious! Our religion is rarely perfectly sincere except when it is expressed in such a cry for help. But with his great 'nevertheless' Jesus went beyond *us*, almost beyond religion: 'Not what I will, but what Thou wilt.' It is easy for us to pray, 'Thy will be done,' when all goes well with us, and God's will is clearly seen to be a good will for us and for all; but that his is a good and

wise will we find it hard to believe in moments when our dearest hopes are thwarted and the beneficence of God's purpose is obscure. The Stoic may meet such moments with resignation. That implies an inexorable fate. But the characteristic Christian word is *patience*—and that (as Jesus' example instructs us) is compatible with protest and supplication for relief. It is compatible, indeed, with anything except the ultimate infidelity, the suspicion that the world may turn out to be bad. How much of our life is measured by the intervals of obscurity between our rare moments of insight, and how necessary is the patience which alone can carry us through such intervals without losing faith that God's will is good,—can even enable us to say, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' If that attainment lies at all within the compass of religion, we must recognize it as the apex of this human experience.

And yet this has been called Jesus' 'weak moment'! Without reflecting that in a crisis which might have justified him in thinking only of himself he was so tenderly thoughtful of his weak disciples, returned to them three times, upbraided them so gently—half jestingly—for the faithless watch they kept, and was so solicitous about their danger. Their danger was not imaginary. It seems incredible that none of them was involved in Jesus' fate. When he was leaving Galilee Jesus sternly stated the danger of following him. He pictured his disciples as a procession of *cruciferi* (8[34]), himself at the head. Such things were not unheard of as wholesale executions for civil tumults. *Now* the leader is convinced that he alone is to carry a cross. And yet, who can tell if some of the disciples may not encounter temptations greater than they can bear?

Then Jesus returned to his prayer. That surprises us. For what prayer could aptly follow the supreme surrender of 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt'? And 'in the same words.' That surprises us still more. The same supplication over again! How human! A sort of litany. How religious! Was not that what he himself had condemned as 'vain repetitions'? The *Kyrie eleison* is a repetition which may or may not be 'vain.'

In spite of his absorption in prayer, Jesus was more alert

than his watchmen. He was aware that his hour of trial had come to an end. He was on his feet to meet the emergency, strong and calm now; and he summoned his disciples to advance with him.

'The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.' It is not the prophet from Nazareth who is betrayed, but the Son of Man. Everyone in Jerusalem felt (the disciples included) that this ignominious arrest, with all the deeper ignominy which was to follow, was a clear and conclusive negation of this man's presumptuous claim to be the Christ, the King of Israel. Jesus alone was not dismayed, for from the beginning he had treasured no other ideal but that of a futuristic Messiahship which he expressed by the title Son of Man. His earthly fate was not incongruous with *this* ideal.

Who were these 'sinners' into whose hands the Son of Man was betrayed? The word clearly does not here denote such irreligious people as he had been blamed for associating with in Galilee. These 'sinners' (oh, the irony of it!) were the high priests and the scribes and Pharisees.

The incidents of Jesus' Passion properly suggest devotional comment. But this is not a devotional book—far from it. I have written devotional meditations upon the Passion. And that is all quite in vain so long as people do not believe that the story is substantially true, or have not the faith that he who suffered was the Son of God, or count it no longer reasonable to conceive that his suffering and death and resurrection procured any benefits for *us*. I shall strive to maintain the cold and detached tone of the historian, content if I can make it appear that the story of Jesus is not such stuff as old wives' fables are made of. For until these things are again known to be real they cannot again be used for an appeal to the emotions.

¶ 96. The Arrest.

Mk 14[43–49]. **And at that moment, while he was still speaking, there came up Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, who were sent by the high priests and the scribes and the elders.** [44] **Now the betrayer had given them a signal, saying, 'Whoever I kiss, he is the one. Seize him and get him safely away.'** [45] **So**

**when he arrived he went straight up to Jesus and said, 'Rabbi, Rabbi,' and kissed him. [46] Then they laid hands on him and secured him. [47] But one of the bystanders drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. [48] And Jesus addressed them, saying, 'As against a robber you have come out with swords and clubs to arrest me. [49] Day by day I was among you teaching in the Temple, and you did not seize me. But this is a fulfilment of the Scriptures!'**

In this act Judas completes his treachery. If his services as guide were not essential, they were doubtless very convenient. His prompt identification of Jesus made it possible to effect the arrest without rousing the neighbourhood and causing a tumult. It was not difficult to distinguish Jesus, for he alone was on his feet, and the moon was full. The instructions Judas gave make it plain that the authorities did not want to arrest any of the disciples. It was customary for disciples to kiss their teachers. With this act, which completed his perfidy, Judas disappears. He does not appear among the witnesses in the house of the high priest.

The Jewish authorities had no regular troops at their disposal. The motley police force they had collected for this purpose is disparagingly spoken of by the Evangelist as a crowd or mob. Some of them were armed with a weapon which might equally well be described as a long knife or as a short sword; others carried clubs. Nondescript as this posse was, it represented the authority of the Jewish nation. 'High priest, scribes and elders,' is an enumeration of all the orders which constituted the Sanhedrin. That assembly had not been convened to authorize the arrest of Jesus, but its assent could be assumed when all parties were concordant. The high priest, in the meanwhile, could act on his own authority, and his personal slave, who lost his ear on that occasion, was probably the leader of the band. The rest were strong-armed braves. Jesus' protest against such a display of brute force was thoroughly justified. It is not easy to credit Luke's report that 'the chief priests and captains of the Temple and elders' were with this mob (Lk 22[52]), though his words, which he ascribes to Jesus, about

being with them in the Temple apply better to such people than to the roughnecks who assaulted him in the garden. I take it that his words were *ideally* addressed to the authorities. If they had moral confidence in their authority, why did they not arrest him in the daytime and at the moment when he was uttering in the Temple the teaching which prompted their hostility ?

If ' one of the bystanders ' means one of the Twelve (as the other Evangelists affirm), we are surprised to learn that he carried a short sword. Perhaps this is explained by Luke's report ($22^{36, 38}$) that Jesus had counselled his disciples to procure swords and was satisfied when he heard that they had *two*. But these two statements are no less strange than the fact we seek to explain by them. They are both so foreign to the tone which pervades the four Gospels that we might feel free to reject them as spurious, if only it were not impossible to attribute such things to our Evangelists, who may rather be suspected of a tendency to ignore the element of physical violence which (as we have remarked on p. 430) must have accompanied Jesus' appearance in Jerusalem. Matthew's pacifist sentence, ' He who takes the sword shall also perish by the sword ' (Mt $26^{52}$), is not consonant with the advice to buy swords. We wonder also that two swords were counted ' enough.' They were evidently not enough for defence against the band which was sent by the authorities ; and to this force Jesus offered no resistance. In protesting against the rude show of violence which was made against him, as against a robber who might be expected to defend his life desperately, Jesus implied that he would have submitted peaceably to the national authority duly accredited and legally exercised. I surmise that the two swords were intended for a not improbable encounter with an assassin, in case his enemies should resort to this means of getting rid of him secretly. We can be sure that Jesus was not willing to die obscurely. ' The Scripture ' (Isa. $53^{12}$) ' must be fulfilled ' that he was to suffer death at the hands of the law as a criminal. This is the prophecy which Luke's Gospel associates with the two swords, and we must suppose that this was referred to in verse 49. They treated him as a robber ! Very well—that was in exact correspondence

with Isaiah's prophecy: 'Because he poured out his soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bare the sins of many.' We have seen that this was the passage in which Jesus discovered an expression for the significance of his death ('for many'), and we cannot wonder that he should remark upon the precise fulfilment of this other clause.

¶ 97. FLIGHT.

Mk 14[50-52]. **And deserting him, they all escaped by flight.** [51] **But a certain youth followed him, unclothed except for a sheet which he had wrapped about him,** [52] **and when the young men took hold of him he let go the sheet and fled away naked.**

The first sentence records the sad fulfilment of Jesus' prediction (14[27]). The account of the youth who alone had the courage to accompany Jesus for a short time is peculiar to St. Mark's Gospel. The other Evangelists did not think it worth recording. For this reason a number of modern commentators are inclined to suppose that St. Mark may here be telling about himself—just as St. John referred anonymously to 'the beloved disciple.' This suggestion is not only attractive but specious—in spite of Wellhausen, who applies to such interpreters the cruel epithet of 'Christian rabbis,' feeling himself superior because he does not treat the text of Mark as solid enough to support any construction. But Mark *was* a youth at that time; he was also in Jerusalem, we must presume, since his mother dwelt there and is found acting as hostess of the Church not long after the Resurrection (Acts 12[12])—from whence it may be surmised (with an ever more tenuous thread of probability) that hers was the 'upper chamber' where the Apostles lodged in the earliest days of the Church, and perhaps the 'upper room' where the Last Supper was eaten,—and that would explain how her son John Mark happened to follow Jesus to Gethsemane.

All very interesting, if true. But even if we cannot identify St. Mark with this strange young man in a sheet, the incident is not without interest. In the first place, it

reminds us that this was a ' youth movement.' Jesus and his disciples were still young men, and this fellow could have been hardly a man, if he was distinguished as a youth in comparison with them. Other ' youths ' (if we may trust a doubtful reading) were arrayed against Jesus. That also is characteristic of ' youth movements.' More important is the fact that there was another besides the Twelve passing the night with Jesus in the orchard. As he is not spoken of as an exception, we may suppose that there were more of them. It is not impossible, then, that other disciples besides the Twelve were present at the Supper. And that is as far as we can go with our precarious conjectures in this direction. In another direction the young man in a sheet corroborates our assumption that Jesus and his companions were accustomed to sleep in the orchard. If that youth found it agreeable to undress and cover himself only with a sheet, it would appear that there was no hardship in sleeping out of doors. But perhaps the sheet was a luxury, in addition to a blanket, for we hear later of a fire in the house of the high priest. The fact that this youth had a sheet suggests that he was at home in Jerusalem—the pilgrims would not carry such things with them. But that brings us round again to the fancy that he might have been St. Mark, and there our conjectures end. Whoever he was, this youth was more courageous than the Apostles—as brave as anyone could be who had not an unwholesome desire for martyrdom.

## Section 13. ¶¶ 98–101

## THE TRIAL

### Mk $14^{53}$—$15^{15}$

¶ 98. Before the High Priest.

Mk $14^{53-65}$. **And they took Jesus off to the high priest ; and all the high priests and the elders and the scribes came together to confront him.**

**[54] And Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest, where he sat among the attendants and warmed himself at the fire.**

**[55] And the high priests and the whole Sanhedrin sought evidence against Jesus that would justify them in putting him to death, but they found none. [56] For though many bore false witness against him, their evidence did not agree. [57] And some got up and bore false witness against him, saying, [58] 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days will build another made without hands."' [59] But even in this their evidence did not agree. [60] Then the high priest rose in their midst and asked Jesus, 'Have you no reply to make? What about the charges they make against you?' [61] But he was silent and made no reply. Again the high priest interrogated him and said, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' [62] Jesus said, 'I am,—and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' [63] Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'What is the use of hearing more witnesses? [64] You have heard the blasphemy. What is your judgment?' And they all condemned him as deserving of death. [65] And some started to spit upon him and to blindfold him and strike him and say to him, 'Prophesy.' And the attendants beat him as they took him in custody.**

No part of the Gospel story is more unsatisfactory than the account of Jesus' trial, and more especially the first stage of it conducted by the Jewish authorities. If only we had been told what were all the charges brought against Jesus, we might have a clearer idea of what occurred in Jerusalem during the days preceding the festival. The mention of Barabbas and his band, who were imprisoned by the Roman authorities for an insurrection which involved the death of some persons, suggests that the Messianic enthusiasm aroused by Jesus' presence in the city may have prompted acts of violence, for which the authorities sought to make Jesus criminally responsible. But the only evidence St. Mark reports is a disrespectful word about the Temple, which was evidently a garbled account of Jesus' saying. To that extent the accusers might be called false witnesses. But if the witnesses had been suborned and coached beforehand, they would not have failed to agree in

their testimony. The concordant testimony of at least two witnesses was required for conviction. Doubtless the Jewish authorities wished to preserve the forms of law so far as possible, but the jurists who seek to demonstrate that both trials were regular find no sufficient support in the Gospel for their vain ingenuity. Luke and John try to better Mark's account, but fail to persuade us that they had more light on the subject than he had.

It may be that the Church was disposed to obscure the evidence of violence which accompanied Jesus' appearance in Jerusalem. But this hypothesis is not necessary to explain the defects in the account of Jesus' trial. They are sufficiently explained by the fact that the Church had no reliable information. None of the disciples or sympathizers was at hand to witness it. In the house of the high priest only members of the Sanhedrin were present, along with the band which had brought Jesus there. Peter, ' below ' in the courtyard, was not in a position to watch the proceedings in the council chamber. According to Mark, he was in the ' vestibule ' when he disowned Jesus for the third time, and Luke ($22^{61}$) has to ignore this fact in order to represent that ' Jesus looked upon him.' Jesus' sympathizers would hardly know of his arrest till he had been sentenced by Pilate. For Pilate held his court in a remote part of the city and at so early a hour that only persons interested in the cases pending would be likely to be present.

Even the assembly in the house of the high priest could hardly be accounted a regular meeting of the Sanhedrin, though many of the members, and certainly representatives of all ranks (' high priests, elders and scribes ') seem to have gathered there before daybreak, having been informed during the night that the arrest of Jesus might be expected.

Here for the first time we have the ' high priest ' distinguished from the ' high priests.' It was to his official residence Jesus was taken, and that presumably was contiguous to the council chamber. Mark's story justified the interpretation of Matthew and Luke that it was to the high priest's *house* Jesus was brought, Matthew and John give the name of the high priest—Caiaphas. John states that Jesus was first taken to Annas, who was the father-in-law of

Caiaphas. That statement serves at all events as a hint of who the 'high priests' were. They were the influential members of families which had been enriched and ennobled by possession of the high priestly office. The Law knew of no distinction between priests except that which attached to the supreme eminence of high priest. But the nation had long been under the rule of priestly families who had acquired the prestige of an hereditary aristocracy. These high priests took the lead in the prosecution of Jesus. He had brought this upon himself by his behaviour in the Temple. He had long before made enemies of the Pharisees, who were represented in the Sanhedrin among the elders and scribes, so all parties were unanimous in condemning him. They were bound to put him to death, whether they could find legal grounds for it or not. The authorities already knew that he claimed to be the Christ, and in what a lofty sense he conceived of that claim. But even if Judas had been present to testify against him, this claim was nowhere contemplated in the Law as a criminal offence, and it could not be made to seem serious to the Roman authority, which alone could execute the death penalty—unless it was interpreted in a political sense, as a claim to temporal sovereignty, which might lead to insurrection against Rome.

We can believe that the experience of his trial, with all the insult and maltreatment which accompanied it, was not so hard for Jesus to bear as the temptation of his last hour of liberty. But it is hard for a prisoner to maintain his dignity. Silence and quiet submission to ill-treatment was the only way open to Jesus. He knew, moreover, that nothing he could say in his defence would better his position, and not even his frank confession could make it worse. They were prepared to put him to death in any case. The high priest, when his authoritative interrogation elicited no reply, ventured to put the question which was most essential, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' He was likely surprised, but certainly well content, to hear the prompt and unequivocal reply, 'I am.' Jesus added yet more, exalting his claim to the utmost, but at the same time meeting the objection which made this claim ridiculous when advanced by a helpless prisoner. He spoke of his triumph

as yet to come. That was the implication of his self-chosen title: 'And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' When Messiahship was conceived in that fashion the claim to it might be regarded as blasphemy, and that was a crime punishable by death. The high priest was prompt to take full advantage of the opportunity Jesus furnished him. Dramatically he tore his clothes to express his horror. It was a customary gesture, and the way it ought to be performed was exactly prescribed. No need of witnesses to bear evidence of this or that misdemeanour when this blasphemy had been heard by the whole assembly, and the assembly itself was the judge. It was only necessary to ask these judges what their judgment was, and without hesitation they sentenced Jesus to death.

The high priest scrupulously avoided mention of the name of God, and so also did Jesus. The high priest spoke of God as 'the Blessed,' and Jesus referred to him as 'the Power.' There are many instances in the New Testament of this sort of circumlocution, and it is probable that the Greek Gospels have sought to eliminate a Jewish peculiarity which to Gentile-Christian readers would seem a strange affectation. For the Church did not follow the example of the Synagogue in avoiding the use of the divine names. From this, one might infer that Jesus himself had set an example of greater freedom, but it seems more probable that he did not scandalize his hearers unnecessarily by violating a custom which seemed to them justified by the Third Commandment. Heaven was one of the substitutes for the name of deity, and it is probable that Matthew is right in representing that Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, not of the Kingdom of God. Father, of course, was Jesus' favourite word for God, and this suggests that he commonly conformed to the prevailing custom.

The Gospels do not agree about Jesus' answer to Caiaphas: Luke reports an evasive answer, and Matthew has, 'Thou sayest it,'—which, according to Mark, was his answer to Pilate. It has been supposed that this was an idiomatic way of making an affirmation; but there is no proof of such a use, and we must therefore take Jesus' answer to Pilate

in its literal sense (he could not affirm, in Pilate's sense, that he was a king), and we must reject Matthew's use of this phrase in Jesus' answer to the high priest, where Jesus evidently (even according to Matthew) meant to make a clear affirmation.

Mark seems to hurry over the account of the insulting treatment Jesus suffered at the hands of some members of the Sanhedrin and of the policemen who took custody of him. Luke omits all mention of things so painful to dwell upon. But Matthew pauses to interpret Mark's too brief enumeration of insults. He explains very plausibly that the covering of the head, which was not an uncommon practice with prisoners, was here made an occasion for a game of blind-man's buff: 'Prophesy to us, you Christ, who struck you.' In such a case it is very hard for a prisoner to keep his dignity. And this prisoner was Jesus!

¶ 99. Peter's Denial.

Mk 14[66-72]. **And as Peter was down in the courtyard, one of the maidservants of the high priest came along, [67] and noticing Peter warming himself, she took a look at him and said, 'You too were with this Nazareth man Jesus.' [68] But he denied it, saying, 'I do not know nor understand what you are talking about.' Then he went out into the vestibule. And the cock crowed. [69] And again the maidservant noticed him and began to say to the bystanders that he was one of them. [70] But he denied it again. And after a little the bystanders said to Peter, 'Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean, as one can tell by your speech.' [71] But he began to affirm with oaths, calling down curses on himself if he lied, 'I do not know this man you are talking about.' [72] And a cock crowed for the second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice you will disown me three times.' And at that he wept.**

In the preceding paragraph (verse 54) we had the preparation for this story of Peter's denial. So far it was creditable to Peter. He *was* after all an exception among the Twelve, as he had boasted. He fled with the rest, but

he recovered sufficient courage to follow Jesus at a distance, and even to enter into the courtyard of the high priest's house. But unfortunately there was the *fire*. I imagine that a fire was more appropriate than the young man's sheet for a Passover night in Jerusalem. Peter may well have been cold with fright. If he had not been so indiscreet as to sit near the fire where his face was illuminated (Lk $22^{56}$), he might not have justified Jesus' prediction.

The story of Peter's temptation and fall is so well told that it would be a crime to spoil it with a commentary. Who could have told it but Peter himself? It must have been a great encouragement to Christians to hear the great Apostle tell this story on himself—still more to read it in this Gospel after his heroic martyrdom. But it seems as if in *this* Gospel the story of Peter's fall ought to be completed by that very story of Peter's reinstatement which we read in the appendix to the Fourth Gospel (Jn $21^{15-19}$). The thrice-repeated inquisition, 'Do you love me *more* than these do?' reminiscent of Peter's claim to be an egregious sheep, corresponds point by point with the story of Peter's fall. This Peter who had failed to note the first cock crowing, and did not remember Jesus' words till he had disowned him for the third time with anathemas and oaths, was not observant of Jesus' intention in putting him to the question until 'the third time.' Then the invidious comparison was dropped, and the essential query alone remained, whether he loved in deed and in reality, or only in word and with the tongue. We can understand why Peter was 'grieved' when this question was put to him the *third* time, but his response is surprising to us: 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' That to almighty God all hearts are open, all desires known, and no secrets are hid, is not commonly regarded as a reassuring reflection. This response of Peter's one could hardly invent who had not had Peter's experience. St. John illuminates it in his First Epistle ($3^{19}$): 'We shall assure our heart before him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us, because God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things.' On this occasion, no word could have been more reassuring to Peter than the charge, 'Feed my sheep.' This erring sheep trusted with the oversight of

the flock! Peter's reinstatement was complete when the Lord signified to him 'by what manner of death he should glorify God.' Hardly till after the event would the vague statement, 'You shall stretch forth your hands,' be understood as a presage of crucifixion. And here the emphasis is not upon death, but upon what our Lord in his own experience may have found far worse, the terrible indignity of the prisoner's lot: 'Another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.' As though, risen and glorified, he still carried the scars of *his* experience!

That is ideally, if not historically, the perfect complement to Peter's denial. This, more than any other consideration, persuades me to believe that the tradition underlying this characteristic Johannine account is the missing conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel. It is a common belief that in chapter 21 St. John is dealing with an ancient tradition; but the 'higher' or even the highest criticism will hardly boast of the ability to separate, pure and entire, the original tradition from the colouring it has received in the Fourth Gospel.

¶ 100. PILATE'S COURT.

Mk 15[1-5]. **And as soon as it was daylight, when the high priests along with the elders and scribes, even the whole Sanhedrin, had prepared their decision, they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate.** [2] **And Pilate put the question to him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?'** [3] **But in reply to him Jesus said, 'You say so.' And the high priests vehemently accused him.** [4] **And again Pilate interrogated him, saying, 'Have you no answer to make? See what charges they bring against you.'** [5] **But Jesus made no further reply at all, to Pilate's astonishment.**

This paragraph is interpreted by my translation of it. This is not the sort of a commentary which troubles the reader with the reasons for translating so or so. But that is not to say there are no good reasons. The Jews did not hold a second and more regular meeting of the council after daybreak. After Jesus' confession nothing remained for them to do but to prepare such a report of their decision as

would prompt Pilate to treat the case seriously. The word 'prepare' is not the technical expression for formulating a decision. On this occasion the report was prepared so guilefully that we might say it was concocted. There is no doubt that Jesus was condemned by the Sanhedrin because he claimed to be the Christ, in an eschatological sense, as the Son of the Blessed, or the Son of Man; and it is equally certain that he was sentenced by Pilate as a political pretendant, claiming to be King of the Jews (Son of David). We have seen that the title of Messiah had a double sense for the Jews, and a Roman governor could easily be deceived by the equivocation. For Pilate's benefit the Jews would, of course, interpret the word Messiah as King. So Pilate, to assure himself of the truth of the charge, puts the question to Jesus in this form, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' And to this form of question Jesus could answer neither Yes nor No. Therefore he said, 'You say so.' He might, it is true, have enlightened Pilate by explaining the equivocation (as St. John makes him do, $18^{36, 37}$), but that would have defeated his purpose of dying as a ransom for many. Therefore, after this one word, Jesus preserved completest silence—and Pilate might well have been astonished. It is by no means impossible that Jesus, as a Galilean, was able to answer Pilate's question in Greek, but we can draw no such conclusion from the fact that a narrative which limits itself to essentials makes no mention of an interpreter. Because Jesus' answer was not a clear confession of the charge brought against him, the high priests found themselves obliged to asseverate it vigorously, and Pilate felt bound to interrogate the prisoner further.

It is natural enough for us to suppose that Pilate had his residence in Jerusalem and that on any day, and even at an unseemly early hour in the morning, the Jews were at liberty to bother him with their affairs. That is naïve. The Evangelist assumes more knowledge on the part of his readers. They would know at least that the Procurator of Judaea had his residence at Caesarea (Acts $23^{23 \text{ ff.}}$), where he dwelt in a palace built by Herod the Great, and that he came to Jerusalem on the occasion of the great annual festival. It was a matter of course that he should take advantage of

that opportunity for hearing and deciding cases which the local Roman authorities thought too serious for them to dispose of. It would be natural, too, that he should make a display of his clemency at the time of the festival by pardoning some popular political prisoner. The next paragraph states that this was his custom.

Pilate's audience was held, not within the 'hall' (15¹⁶) which properly was called the Praetorium, but before the door, so that the public could witness the proceedings. That was not an unusual place for the judge to sit, and therefore the reason St. John gives for it is superfluous. The hour for holding the Procurator's court was, of course, fixed by Pilate and duly advertised, so that all who were interested in the decisions pending might be present. As Barabbas and his companions had been arrested some time before by the Roman authorities, it might be expected that his case would come up for hearing, and his supporters would be there in force. On the other hand, as the arrest of Jesus was not yet known to the public, none of his sympathizers would be at hand. The Galilean pilgrims would be the last to interest themselves in the legal decisions of the Procurator of Judaea, who had no jurisdiction in their country. Besides, the place was remote. It was the strong fortress-palace built by Herod on the hill at the north-western extremity of the city. The members of the Sanhedrin had a long distance to go with their prisoner, and they could be trusted to collect a crowd to support them. The very early hour for which the audience was fixed speaks rather for than against the Synoptical report that the trial and crucifixion were on the day of the Passover. The Procurator would wish to dispose of legal business before the festival had fairly begun. We can perceive now how astutely the high priests had chosen the moment for Jesus' arrest, and how favourable to them was the chance that Barabbas, a political offender, was up for trial at the same time.

### ¶ 101. Barabbas or Jesus?

Mk 15⁶⁻¹⁵. **Now at the Festival he used to set free for them some prisoner whom they petitioned for. ⁷ And there was the man known as Barabbas, held prisoner along with**

**revolutionaries who in the uprising had committed murder. [8] And the crowd pressed up and began to petition for the usual favour. [9] Pilate's answer to them was, 'Do you wish me to set free for you the King of the Jews?' [10] (For he knew that it was for envy the high priests had handed him over.) [11] But the high priests instigated the crowd to ask instead that he should set free Barabbas for them. [12] But Pilate insisted, 'What am I to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' [13] Whereupon they shouted back, 'Crucify him!' [14] But Pilate said to them, 'Why, what crime has he committed?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!' [15] So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, set free Barabbas for them, and Jesus, after he had had him flogged, he handed over to be crucified.**

Our comment upon the preceding paragraph anticipated some of the problems we encounter here. Mark has nothing disparaging to say about Barabbas except that some of the men who were arrested along with him were revolutionaries and had committed murder in the uprising. That hardly justifies Luke's inference that Barabbas himself was held on a charge of murder, and it gives no countenance at all to John's assertion ($18^{40}$) that 'Barabbas was a robber.' Matthew ($27^{16}$) is doubtless right in describing him as 'a notable prisoner.' That he must have been, seeing that he had so much popular support. For the same reason we must suppose that the uprising in which he was implicated was a patriotic one. Inasmuch as he is distinguished from his revolutionary accomplices, we must conclude that he was their leader; but he may have been a theoretical revolutionary whom the Romans did not consider too dangerous to be set at liberty—one of those leaders who have to follow their followers when they get out of hand and resort to acts of violence. The killing which is incidental to a political uprising is too harshly described as 'murder.'

That is all there is to say about Barabbas. It was his strange chance to be preferred to Jesus—and by reason of this his name is known in all the world. I have no heart to mention the fantastic theories which find in Barabbas a proof that the Gospel story is a myth. They are as persuasive

and as puerile as the proofs which once convinced many intelligent people that Bacon was Shakespeare. I am sorry to speak so contemptuously because this is the only high flight of Biblical criticism which can be credited to American invention. It was not a theologian who can boast of this distinction, but a mathematician.

Another character whose name became world-famous by a brief contact with Jesus was the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate. In spite of the fact that he is stigmatized in the Apostles' Creed as the executioner of the Lord, we must recognize that all the Evangelists seek to extenuate his crime for the purpose of throwing all the odium upon the Jews. Secular history paints his character in darker colours. It seems that in this instance he was desirous of doing justice —so far as it was convenient. He stands, therefore, as a fair example of Roman justice—human justice. He was scrupulous to interrogate the prisoner to learn if he actually confessed to the crime which was charged against him, and when the crowd petitioned for the usual display of clemency, he himself suggested the release of Jesus. The demeanour of the crowd which 'pressed up' to him was importunate and may have appeared threatening. Pilate may well have supposed that it was the release of this prisoner they exacted of him, Jesus being the only prisoner at that moment in evidence. It required no great astuteness on the part of the judge to detect that the high priests were moved by personal reasons in handing over one of their own nation to the Roman authority. He might expect, therefore, that the populace would take the other side—particularly if it was a question of nationalistic revindication, as the claim to be King of the Jews seemed to indicate. When he learned that the crowd wanted Barabbas released to them, he was at a loss to know what he was to do with Jesus. The claim to be King did not seem to him a grave offence or a serious menace, so long as it did not lead to acts of violence or even to hostile utterances against Rome. It must, in this case, have seemed to him a harmless and pitiable thing.

The crowd was largely composed of the partizans of Barabbas who had come for the purpose of making petition for his release. They did not need the instigation of the high

priests to move them to shout in favour of Barabbas. The retainers of the Sanhedrinists made up another large section of the crowd, and they easily could be prompted to join in the shouting for Barabbas and to lead the shouting for the crucifixion of Jesus. But the Roman Procurator was too proud and aloof to understand this situation. The prime defect of all foreign domination is the failure to understand the sentiments of a subject people. In this chorus which was prepared as much by chance as by guile Pilate supposed that he heard the voice of the Jewish nation. No great wonder, for the official representatives of the nation were there in person, and if he could for a moment suspect that they were perfidiously opposing themselves to a popular movement, the voice of the crowd must have dispelled that suspicion. Justice or no justice, Pilate was desirous of pleasing the people on their festival day. Granting life to one barbarian and dealing death to another seemed an easy way of doing a double favour to this turbulent people and conciliating them to the Roman rule. It was an incident he would soon forget. Barabbas and Jesus were not names which were likely to figure in his reminiscences.

But Pilate figures prominently in the memory of the Church, and the opprobrium which attaches to his name in the Christian creed was transferred to the empire which he represented. He could not imagine how great a disservice he was doing the empire when, by an easy act of complaisance which did not reconcile the Jews, he co-operated in founding a sect which cherished an unappeasable hatred against Rome, cryptically described as ' Babylon the great,' a harlot clothed in scarlet, and seated upon seven hills (1 Pet. $5^{13}$; Rev. $14^{7}$, $17^{1-9}$, $18^{1-24}$). St. Paul, in writing to the Christians in Rome ($13^{1-7}$), would hardly have been so insistent upon the duty of obedience to the constituted secular authorities if the Church in Rome had not been dangerously imbued with sentiments of hostility to the empire.

We have not proved ourselves any cleverer than Pilate, and the only excuse we can offer is that the Fourth Gospel has led us astray by its evident tendency to represent that the Jewish people as a whole deliberately rejected their King. But we might have heeded St. Luke's description ($23^{48}$) of

the multitudes who witnessed the crucifixion 'smiting their breasts' as an expression of the horror they felt for this deed. According to the account which we are following (which is the basis of all the Synoptic accounts) it is not plausible to suppose that any of the pious pilgrims who acclaimed Jesus on his entrance into Jerusalem, or any of the Jews who applauded his teaching in the Temple, would spend the first hours of their religious festival climbing up to the castle to witness the judgment of criminals. No one could guess that Jesus would be among them. But we are doubly in error when we regard the voice of the crowd at the trial as proof of the fickleness of the Jews. One day, we say, they acclaimed Jesus as the Christ, and the next they shouted, 'Crucify him!' But not only do we lack any ground for asserting that those who raised this cruel shout were the same people who had once acclaimed Jesus, we have also no evidence in St. Mark's Gospel that the demonstration of acclaim to Jesus was a Messianic ovation (see pp. 418f). It may be that those who acclaimed him as the prophet from Nazareth would have been scandalized to learn that he took himself to be the Christ. But even if we may surmise that such people would have denied him their support, we cannot justly charge them with fickleness. The fact is that during the days of his flesh Jesus gave the people no opportunity to register a decision for or against the proposition that he was the Christ. We must get it out of our heads that he was appealing for popular support, desirous of winning his nation over to the recognition that he was their Messianic King, and disappointed at his failure to attain this result. All this is inconsistent with thoroughgoing eschatology. More concretely stated, it is flagrantly inconsistent with his policy of secrecy. If he had been made king in Jerusalem, and had been able to maintain himself against the Roman power, he would not have been one step nearer to his glorification as the Son of Man, seated at the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven. He was not one step farther from it when the official representatives of his nation, having condemned him for blasphemy, handed him over to Pilate, and when Pilate, without condemning him, handed him over to the executioners.

## Section 14. ¶¶ 102–105

## THE PASSION

### Mk 15[16–47]

¶ 102. Mocked.

Mk 15[16–20]. **Then the soldiers took him inside the hall (the praetorium properly so called) and called together the whole force. [17] And they dressed him up in a purple cloak and put on his head a crown of thorns they had plaited [18] and began to salute him with, 'Long live the King of the Jews!' [19] And they struck him over the head with a reed and knelt down and did him homage. [20] And when they had finished making sport of him they took off the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him and led him out of the city to crucify him.**

From the statement that the soldiers took Jesus 'inside' the praetorium proper, we can infer that Pilate's judgment-seat was *outside*. St. John says (19[13]) it was a place called 'The Pavement (*Gabbatha*),' and his account of Pilate's entrances and exits along with Jesus is not only graphic but plausible.

The soldiers garrisoned at Jerusalem belonged to the *auxilia*. Hence they were not Romans—but neither were they Jews, for the Jews were exempt from conscription. The auxiliary troops were recruited from provincials of all sorts—a tough lot. It goes without saying that their horse-play with Jesus would likely be rough. The small squad to which Jesus was delivered called upon the whole band that was idling in the hall to join in the game of pretending that he was a real king. Mark is loath to dwell upon that scene. He does not say (as Matthew does) that they stripped Jesus of his garments, though that is implied by his statement that at the end 'they put his own clothes on him.' Perhaps they stripped him only to his shirt, for one would think that the last indignity of exposing his nakedness would be left to the moment of the crucifixion. Mark is so much in haste to be done with this account that

he fails to tell us why they were using a ' reed ' to strike Jesus over the head. Matthew must have known this story apart from St. Mark's Gospel, for he aptly represents ($27^{29}$) that this reed was available because the soldiers had put it in Jesus' hand as a sceptre. He might have refused to hold it, you think ? But submission was one of the traits of his silence. Was there any other way by which he could maintain his dignity ? St. John, it is true, succeeds in giving an impression of Jesus' superiority by having him speak proud words to Pilate—101 words in the Greek text. A painter can give us that impression. I am thinking particularly of a celebrated Russian picture entitled ' Christ before Pilate,' which I once saw in company with a small boy, the son of Commander Ballington Booth, who described it, naïvely but justly, as ' Pilate before Christ.' The more historical accounts of the Synoptists may fail to give us so right an impression, because we do not *hear* the silences. Luke may have felt that to give an impression of Jesus' dignity (such dignity as a criminal led to a shameful execution might possess !) there was no other literary device available but to put calm words in Jesus' mouth. He reports a long discourse to the women of Jerusalem (62 words) and recounts 26 words uttered on the Cross. As a total he reports 123 words uttered by Jesus from the time he left Gethsemane till his death. St. John reports 163 words ; St. Matthew, 30 ; St. Mark, 26—not one-fourth as many as Luke, nor a sixth as many as John. In the Fourth Gospel, at least, there is no evidence of Jesus' silence : he talked volubly to Pilate and deeply impressed him by what he said. But we cannot doubt that Jesus was as silent as Mark represents, that he uttered but one sentence before the high priest (his necessary confession), a sentence of only two words before Pilate, and a cry of four words from the Cross—that terrible cry which neither Luke nor John was willing to report. In Jesus' silence the Church found (Acts $8^{32}$) a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy :

> He was led as a sheep to the slaughter,
> And as a lamb before his shearers is dumb,
> So he opened not his mouth.

¶ 103. Crucified.

Mk 15[21–32]. **And a man whom they encountered as he came in from the country, a Cyrenian named Simon (the father of Alexander and Rufus), they impressed to carry his cross. [22] And they brought him to a place called Golgotha (which in their language means a place which is a skull). [23] And they offered him drugged wine, but he would not take it. [24] And they crucified him, and made parcels of his clothes, casting lots to decide which each should have. [25] Now it was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. [26] And the inscription stating the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' [27] And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right hand, and the other on his left. [28] And the Scripture was fulfilled which said, 'And he was classed among criminals.' [29] And the passers-by jeered at him, wagging their heads derisively and saying, 'Aha! you who were to tear down the Temple and build it in three days! [30] Come down from the cross and save yourself.' [31] So, too, the high priests made sport of him, one with another and with the scribes: 'He saved others,' they said, 'but is not able to save himself. [32] Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe.' Also those who were crucified with him abused him.**

Mark is in haste also to have done with the story of the Crucifixion. The most evident sign of it is the fact that he hurries over the stupendous statement, 'And they crucified him,' to tell about an insignificant detail—'And they made parcels of his clothes, casting lots for them.' It may be presumed, however, that this detail was not insignificant to him, that this was one of the incidents of the Passion which the Church of his time had come to regard as occurring in fulfilment of prophecy (Ps. 22[18]), though this particular proof from prophecy is first appealed to by St. John (19[24]). St. John says that the clothes were divided into 'four parts, to every soldier a part,' indicating very plausibly that there were just four soldiers detailed, along with a centurion, for the execution of Jesus. Probably there were as many soldiers sent, under the same centurion, to deal with each

of the robbers. It was a supreme indignity that Jesus should be crucified between two robbers. Perhaps the Procurator was not personally responsible for that arrangement. He had so much to do at his early audience—liberating a revolutionary leader, and sentencing two robbers—that he would not be much concerned about the fate of Jesus, nor interested in the arrangements for his execution. But probably it was he who prescribed (Jn $19^{22}$) the ironical inscription, and St. John may be right in saying that it was written in three languages—though 'Hebrew' likely means Aramaic. Crucifixions were public in order that they might be effective as deterrents from crime, and to that end it was important to make it plain to all beholders what crime was being punished. The robbers would be designated as robbers, and Jesus as 'The King of the Jews.' The Evangelists differ about the wording of the inscription, and archaeologists have not yet discovered the original; but it requires a great sceptic to doubt that Pilate was capable of giving this grim warning to Jewish nationalists.

Some texts omit verse 28, so it may be doubted if St. Mark made this reference to the fulfilment of Scripture, but hardly that he had it in mind (*cp.* $14^{49}$). The omission of this reference to prophecy would be another indication of the Evangelist's haste to finish so painful a story. The Church as a whole was reticent about Jesus' passion. We count it a principal means of edification to dwell upon and embroider the meagre details which the Gospels report to us. The early Church thought that enough was said by the word 'crucified.' The details which Mark tells us here are dryly told, and, except for the jeers of the beholders, they are lacking in pathos. We wonder that he tells with so much interest about a Cyrenian named Simon whom they encountered at the gate of the city and compelled to carry Jesus' cross, whereas we are left to *infer* that up to that moment Jesus had staggered under the burden. It would seem as if Mark wished to distract the reader's attention from the sufferings of Jesus. The reference to Alexander and Rufus would hardly have been made unless these two men (and presumably their father also) had been

well-known members of the Church. This Simon, a Jew of the dispersion, piously named after one of the patriarchs, had doubtless come to Jerusalem as a pilgrim along with his sons. It was characteristic of the dispersion *then*, as of the dispersion now, that the sons were not given characteristic Jewish names. Alexander is Greek, and Rufus is Latin. That is a trivial observation which distracts us from Jesus' sufferings. More interesting is the reflection that instead of the procession of *cruciferi* Jesus at one time envisaged ($8^{34}$), there was only one, a complete stranger, who did not carry the Cross because he was a disciple, but became a disciple because he had borne the Cross. But even on these considerations, which have a certain pathos, St. Mark, in his haste to be through, does not dwell. Still less does he cite the names of Alexander and Rufus as witnesses to the historical fact of the Crucifixion. We in our day, when men have become so clever as to doubt if such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed, might be glad to appeal to such unimpeachable witnesses. They could testify that their father had carried Jesus' cross and watched him die on it. But the early Church needed no witnesses to testify that Jesus had lived—still less that he had died a shameful death upon the Cross. That was the paradox they had to wrestle with and could by no means explain away.

To say Jesus was crucified was enough, for the readers of the Gospels knew only too well what crucifixion was. They could not escape the sight of criminals agonizing for hours on their crosses, for to make this punishment exemplary the sufferers had to be displayed along the highways which approached the cities, where there were sure to be ' passers-by.' All Christians knew how horrible was this punishment and how degrading even to the beholder was this exposure of human nakedness and suffering ; for this did not cease to be the common mode of execution until the empire became Christian. They knew in how many different forms crosses were improvised, and in what various ways the victims were attached to them, but they were reticent about such things. We can infer from St. John's account of the appearance to Thomas (Jn $20^{27}$) that Jesus' hands were nailed to his cross, but we cannot surely

infer that his feet were nailed also (Lk $24^{39}$). The early Church spoke frequently of the Cross, as the most characteristic topic of Christian theology; it was discovered mysteriously in many common objects, like the anchor, and in the cardinal points of the compass; it was a gesture by which Christians could recognize one another, and used (like a phylactery) to remind themselves of what they were; but it was never depicted realistically so long as the disciples of Jesus were exposed to the danger of dying in the same manner as their Lord. (For there was, after all, a long procession of *cruciferi* which followed Jesus afar off!) Not till the fifth century did the Church essay to picture the Crucifixion—and then it was not a dead man they depicted, never a suffering man, and rarely a naked one. There hangs a crucifix above my desk, but I cannot blame the Reformers who sought to abolish a too realistic expression of Jesus' suffering and humiliation which does not agree with the reticence of the Gospels and did not come into use till the dark ages of barbarism.

'They offered him drugged wine, but he would not take it,' St. Mark reports dryly, and does not linger to point out the pathos of his resolution to drink the cup of suffering to the dregs without dulling his sensibility to pain by the means which the rough mercy of the soldiers offered him. Golgotha (so called for its resemblance to a skull) was a name so memorable that I have no doubt the place itself was accurately identified when Constantine built the church of the Holy Cross. The legend of Helena's discovery of the Cross is a rather different thing.

St. Mark is satisfied with this brief description of Jesus' six hours of silence upon the Cross. And rightly so, for nothing that was said or done to him throws any light upon the character of Jesus. Only his silence was significant, and that cannot be described. His silence upon the Cross was not a matter of course, for the robbers who were crucified with him were not silent. Both of them (*pace* Luke) reviled him. The jests which were made at Jesus' expense are very plausible, but I have some difficulty in imagining that high priests and scribes—personages of such great dignity—would linger long at the place of execution.

¶ 104. Dead.

Mk 15[33–41]. **And at noon there was darkness over the whole land until three o'clock. [34] And at three o'clock Jesus cried in a loud voice, 'Eloí, Eloí, lamá sabachthaní?' Which means, *My* God, *my* God, why hast thou forsaken me? [35] And on hearing this some of the bystanders said, 'See! he is calling for Elijah.' [36] And one man ran off and soaked a sponge in common wine and put it on the end of a reed to give him a drink, saying, 'Come on, let us see if Elijah does come to take him down.' [37] But Jesus gave a loud cry and expired. [38] And the curtain of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. [39] And when the centurion who stood facing him saw him expire in this way, he said, 'Surely this man was a son of God!' [40] And there were also some women watching from a distance, among them Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome —[41] women who had followed and served him while he was in Galilee—besides many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.**

Even in his account of Jesus' expiring moment Mark strikes no note of sentimental pathos, has no word to say about his physical anguish, no trait intended to work upon the reader's feeling. And though he is reporting the testimony of women, he says nothing about *their* anguish. St. John, by the fiction of representing the women and the beloved disciple beneath the Cross, is able to give us, as by reflection, a lively impression of Jesus' suffering. But there is nothing like that here. We might account for the brief report of the trial by the fact that there were no Christian witnesses. But here to our surprise we find that there were disciples witnessing the Crucifixion 'from a distance,' and that all of them were women. Was it because they were braver than the men? or did they incur less danger? 'Women who had followed and served him while he was in Galilee'—we cannot help being surprised at this statement, for in his whole story of the days in Galilee Mark has given us no hint of such a thing. For that reason—because it is contrary to the tendency of this Gospel—we

cannot doubt it. This furnishes no just excuse for Renan's sentimentalism, but it hints to us how much Mark has not told us. We could barely guess that women might be in the company that followed him from Galilee (p. 355). Luke ($8^{2,3}$) has not done enough to remedy Mark's defect. And even about the few women who are named here we are left in confusion. Mark has told us nothing hitherto about Mary of Magdala or Salome. And this Mary who was the mother of James and Joses—such were the names of two of Jesus' brothers ($6^{3}$)—is it possible that Mark means in this indirect way to indicate the mother of our Lord? This Mary (designated in $16^{1}$ as 'Mary of James') was one of the three women who went to the tomb on the first day of the week. We might suppose that she was the *wife* or *daughter* of James, had not *two* sons been mentioned in this earlier instance. How many things this Evangelist knew which he did not tell us! How little he guessed that they would be lost to memory because he did not write them down!

This part of his story Mark embellishes with myth. Though he has not tried to depict the human sympathy of the faithful women, he represents that there was a cosmic sympathy with Jesus' death. A darkness spread over the whole land of Palestine—we need not exaggerate the miracle by extending the darkness over the whole earth. And the curtain of the Temple was mysteriously torn into two parts, signifying the end of the old religion. This is a sober beginning compared with what we find developed in Mt $27^{51-53}$, where we hear of an earthquake and premature resurrections of the dead. The Gospel of the Hebrews represented that 'the lintel of the Temple door, a stone of enormous size, was broken and divided in two.' St. John has suppressed all these mythical traits. He deals in legend, but not in myth. Even the eschatological myth exemplified by the Kingdom of God was uncongenial to him. But I have no quarrel with myth as the Evangelists here employ it. It is one way (parallel with the dogmatic way) of expressing the necessary conviction that the death of Jesus Christ has a cosmical significance. I say that this conviction is necessary, for the alternative is to regard the

death of Jesus merely as the end of a great delusion. The myth protests against us all who take a middle ground:

> That Life, that Death! And all, the earth
> Shuddered at,—all the heavens grew black
> Rather than see; all, nature's rack
> And throe at dissolution's brink
> Attested,—all took place, you think,
> Only to give our joys a zest
> And prove our sorrows for the best?

But alongside of this prodigious myth, does not the Evangelist give us sober history which cuts even this middle ground from beneath our feet? 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' What can that mean but that Jesus himself at the moment of death had a lucid perception of his great delusion? His high-blown hopes at length burst under him. And the Evangelist—what can he mean by recording such a word? What else but to let us know, here at the end, that all he has related hitherto—all this about the Kingdom of God and the resurrection of the dead and Eternal Life and the hope of sharing in the Glory of God—is the story of a delusion? So it might seem except for the fact that for the Evangelist this is not the *end*. His story does not stop till it reaches the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. What a strange historian he is, then! For he does not stop to give us a hint how this last terrible cry is to be reconciled with the hope of the Gospel. He does not even seem to attach to it the immense significance it evidently has. For, just as he had sought to lighten the tragedy of the word 'crucified' by passing on to the trivial circumstance that the soldiers cast lots for Jesus' garments, so here it seems as if he would distract our attention from the significance of this cry by mentioning the strange misapprehension of some of the bystanders and the last jest which was perpetrated at Jesus' expense.

I here follow St. Mark in his digression. It furnishes us incidentally with some light upon our problem.

We are told that Jesus cried 'in a loud voice'—loud enough, perhaps, to reach the faithful women who were watching—and that makes it the more strange to us that any of the bystanders could have mistaken the name of

God for the name Elijah (*Eliya* is nearly the sound of it). But, in the first place, we may reflect upon the prejudice which prohibited the Jews from pronouncing the name of God except when reading or quoting from the Scriptures (see p. 525). No one, therefore, would expect Jesus, even in his extremity, to utter the divine name. That, however, does not go far to explain how anyone could mistake the Aramaic *Eloi*, which we have in St. Mark's text, for the name of the prophet *Eliya*. The difficulty would not be great, if we might suppose that St. Matthew's text is here the more original, for that has the Hebrew name for God, *Eli*. And that, in fact, we have good reason to accept; for, according to St. Matthew's text, this saying is half in Hebrew and half in Aramaic; and while it is not likely that this hybrid form would be invented, we might expect a copyist to harmonize this discordancy by the easy device of using the Aramaic name for God. Matthew was so faithful a transcriber that we can hardly credit him with so important an alteration of Mark's text. We must suppose that Mark's text originally had *Eli*, for that is the form which might be mistaken for the name of the prophet Elijah. We must regard it, then, as an accident that St. Mark's text was altered while St. Matthew's was not.

For us who have read this history from the beginning, and have noted Jesus' interest in the Forerunner, there is a special poignancy in the suggestion that in his extremity he was calling upon Elijah to smooth his way before him. But it cannot be supposed that the bystanders who so grossly misapprehended his cry would think of this special connection between the Messiah and Elijah. They could only think of Elijah (as the Jews actually did) as the common helper in time of need—a sort of San Antonio. How gross was their mistake! They thought that Jesus was calling upon one of the saints, whereas he was still crying to his God. That is indeed the fact which we must dwell upon. One who has not ceased to cry mightily to his God—even with a desperate query—has not yet come to the end of faith and hope.

St. Mark does not explain why a cry for help which was supposed to be addressed to Elijah should prompt some

one to offer Jesus a drink of the sour wine which the soldiers had at hand for wiling away the tedium of their watch. We can understand that a drink could only have been offered by means of a sponge. The drugged wine could have been offered him in a cup before he was nailed to the Cross. It was presumably a soldier who lifted up the sponge, but as he could not have uttered the scoffing word about Elijah coming to give help, Matthew's version ($27^{49}$) is the more plausible, that 'the others said, "Hold up, let us see whether Elijah is coming to save him."' St. John, as he omits the bitter cry of Jesus, has of course nothing to say about Elijah, and he seeks to account for the offer of a drink by representing that Jesus (for the sake of fulfilling a prophecy, Ps. $69^{21}$) said, 'I thirst' ($19^{28, 29}$). He is also indiscreet enough to represent that Jesus received the drink, whereas St. Mark implies the contrary. Twice after the Last Supper Jesus was offered wine, and would not drink it again till he should drink it new in his Father's Kingdom.

Jesus' last cry, according to St. Mark, was 'a loud cry,' and nothing more. No intelligible word accompanied it. But St. Luke presumes to tell us what he said: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' No word could better express how 'comfortable' was Jesus' death. It would be a comfort to us, if we could accept it. But what trust can we put in an evangelist who suppresses the cry of despair and puts this calm and comfortable word in its stead? We are obliged to face the enigma with which Mark confronts us. What candour we discover in this Christian who believes that Jesus is the Christ and yet reports such a word! What an historian we have here! We evidently have not been at fault in trusting him so fully. Men might have some excuse for doubting if such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed—if it were not so certain that he *died*, and died with this despairing cry.

St. Mark gives us not the least hint how the Church of his day contrived to reconcile this cry with the faith that Jesus was indeed the Christ and was *not* forsaken. We are left to our own devices. It has been thought that Jesus began with a loud voice to recite the 22nd Psalm, and

repeated the rest of it secretly. His cry was, in fact, the first verse of that Psalm. This explains why he uttered the name of God, and uttered it in the Hebrew form, *Eli*. There is no good reason to doubt that he knew the Psalm in Hebrew. When we read the first twenty-one verses of that Psalm (which seems to have been originally the whole of it), not only are we struck by the amazing correspondences (' They pierced my hands and my feet. . . . They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots '), but we have to recognize that there is no other Psalm in the Psalter which in every respect was so appropriate to Jesus' situation. Every one of its complaints fits him perfectly—and why not also its expressions of trust and hope ?

> But thou art holy,
> O thou that art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
> Our Fathers trusted in thee :
> They trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them.
> They cried unto thee and were delivered :
> They trusted in thee and were not ashamed.
> Be not thou far off, O Lord :
> O thou my succour, haste thee to help me.

I confess for my own part that I could not if I would resist the conviction that Jesus when he died was repeating to himself this Psalm, and was finding comfort both in its complaint and in its assurance. His last unintelligible cry might have been the conclusion of it.

If this seems a bold conjecture, the comment of Dante is far bolder. Its audacity commends it to me. In the *Purgatorio*, xxiii. 73 ff., he depicts the joyful haste of souls to reach their goal, the Tree of Life :

> *Chè quella voglia all' albero ci mena,*
> *che menò Cristo lieto a dire ' Elì,'*
> *quando ne liberò con la sua vena.*
> (For that desire leads us to the Tree
> Which led Christ joyfully to cry, *Elì*,
> What time he freed us with his precious blood.)

That seems extravagant . . . and yet, if we give the word the accent which Dante gives it (and which I have been scrupulous to indicate in the text as the accent of the

Greek transliteration), we may discover some reason for it. With a loud voice Jesus appropriated God. With solemn emphasis he cried, '*My* God, *my* God.' When we reflect how profoundly Jesus had pondered upon the significance of God being somebody's God ('I am the God of Abraham,' *etc.*), when we remember how passionately he affirmed that *there* was to be found the pledge of the resurrection of the dead ($12^{26, 27}$), we cannot think that he forsook his hope in God even when he felt forsaken.

St. Mark does not mean to leave us disconsolate. Though he has reported this cry, he has reported also the judgment of the centurion who heard it. This man's duty held him to that hateful spot till he should see the last of his prisoners expire. At the end he 'stood facing' Jesus and 'saw him expire *in this way*.' What could there have been about the 'thus' and 'how' of Jesus' death to attract the captain's interest and cause him to break out with such an exclamation? There was the fact that he died for six hours in perfect silence—and that at the end he broke his silence with a loud cry which indicated that he felt himself forsaken by his God. That cry was no insignificant feature of 'the way' Jesus died—yet, in spite of it (or should we say, because of it? because of something which the written record fails to convey to us? why not because of Jesus' amazing appropriation of his God?), the captain exclaimed, 'Surely this man was a son of God!' We must not exaggerate. This pagan captain did not mean *the* Son of the only God. Polytheism makes it easy to say a son of God, a divine man. But Luke ($23^{47}$) goes too far when he pares this down till it means nothing more than 'a just man.' Mark certainly means us to understand that there was something about Jesus which struck the captain as supermannish, superhuman, supernatural. I do not wonder that this centurion became the subject of legend, was given the name of Longinus, and figures as a Christian saint. The legend is not improbable.

> Once feel about, and soon or late you hit
> Some sense in which it might be after all,—
> Why not?—the Way, the Truth, the Life!

¶ 105. Buried.

Mk $15^{42-47}$. **And although it was already late, yet because it was the Preparation (that is, the day preceding the Sabbath), [43] Joseph of Arimathea, a highly respected member of the council, who was himself living in expectation of the Kingdom of God, made bold to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. [44] And Pilate wondered whether he was already dead, and sent for the centurion and asked if he was actually dead, [45] and when he learned from the centurion that this was so he granted the corpse to Joseph. [46] And he bought a linen sheet and took him down from the cross and wrapped him in the linen and laid him in a tomb which was hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone in front of the doorway of the tomb. [47] Now Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on and saw where he was laid.**

This Gospel has nothing more to tell us about the human character of Jesus. Jesus has nothing more to say, and his silence is no longer significant. Nothing remains but to learn how he was buried and how the tomb was found empty on the third day.

There is a difficulty discoverable in this story of the burial, which by the exercise of a little goodwill can easily be disposed of, while critics who lack that quality find it insuperable. The whole trouble is that the Evangelist begins by telling us that 'it was already *evening*.' To smooth away the difficulty I take the liberty of saying simply that it was 'late.' *Late* may be relative to some other time or to some action which must be performed, whereas 'evening' (*opsias*) denotes the sunset hour or later, and it is argued that since by that time the Sabbath had already begun, the assumed impossibility of burying on that holy day cannot fairly be adduced as the reason for haste. But Jesus died at three o'clock in the afternoon, and that left time—and none too much time—for Joseph to procure an audience with Pilate, satisfy him that Jesus was actually dead, and deposit the body in a near-by tomb without ceremony—before the sun set and the Sabbath began. St. Mark evidently forced himself to a degree of

brevity which obscures his meaning. Literally he says, ' And it was already evening, *because* it was the Preparation.' Taking the passage as a whole, we can have no doubt what he means to say. The hour was accounted late only because the day happened to be a Friday. This is the only indication we have of the day on which Jesus died. It is mentioned only to explain why there was such need of haste in burying him. For it was the day before the Sabbath, called the Preparation. In Rome, on a Friday evening, I once took part in the burial of a Jew who was also a Christian. Eulogies by many friends delayed the funeral cortège, and when we reached the cemetery the chief rabbi and his assistant gabbled the prayers indecently to get done with them before six o'clock. I do not know if they finished, but after their departure I had quieter prayers with the family, and thought upon our Lord's burial.

At the description of Joseph of Arimathea we may express some surprise, but why incredulity ? Is it incredible that so honourable a man as he was ' living in the hope of the Kingdom of God ' (whether we understand this phrase in the Christian sense or in the Jewish), that he should be profoundly impressed by the personality of Jesus, and nobly assume the responsibility of his burial ? It was, indeed, a generous act to lay the body of this stranger in his own family tomb. If the spot was correctly identified by Constantine, it was very near the place of execution, hewn in the bare rock which gave that locality the name of a skull. Likely enough, for if crucifixions were exhibited along the highways, so also were the tombs. We might regard it as a lucky chance that the family tomb of this man was close by Golgotha. But it is more reasonable to think that Joseph recognized his obligation because his tomb was near. So far as he was aware (for he knew nothing of the women) there was no one else at hand to perform this last pious office in behalf of a man who a couple of days before had about him a band of disciples and was acclaimed by all the pilgrims at Jerusalem. Joseph did what he could in the brief time at his disposal. No mourners were hired, no priest was present, no prayer was said, and there was no anointing of the body ; but this ' respected

member of the council' himself took Jesus down from the Cross, wrapped his already naked body in a sheet, and laid him in the tomb, and rolled a stone in front of the doorway. We remember now that Jesus, two nights earlier, had been 'anointed *beforehand* for his burial' (14[8]).

The two Marys were watching and noted carefully where he was buried. It was evidently already their intention to return to the spot and anoint the body. But no such labour could be done, and the ointments could not even be carried, until the Sabbath was past. Was Mary of Magdala the woman who had anointed him beforehand? Really, Mark can be very vexatious. And the 'Mary of Joses'? Wellhausen says we *must* call her the *daughter* of Joses—in spite of the contradiction with 16[1], where we 'must' call her the daughter of James. In 15[40], by parity of reasoning, we must call her the daughter of James and Joses! This injunction would be very confusing to us—if it were not so ridiculous. We can have no doubt that the same Mary is referred to in all three instances, and that she was the mother of James and Joses; but whether she was also the mother of our Lord, St. Mark does not make plain to us by this strange mode of reference.

## Section 15. ¶ 106

## THE RESURRECTION

### Mk 16[1-8]

¶ 106. The Empty Tomb.

Mk 16[1-8]. **And when the Sabbath was past, Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, in order to go and anoint him. [2] Then very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun was risen, [3] and they were saying one to another, 'Who will roll back for us the stone from the doorway of the tomb?' [4] And they looked and perceived that the stone had been rolled back (for it was very large). [5] And going into the tomb they saw a youth clad in a white robe seated at the right, and they were utterly amazed. [6] But he said to them, 'Do not be amazed. It is Jesus of Nazareth you are seeking, who was**

**crucified? He has risen, he is not here. See! this is the place where they laid him. [7] But go and tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going before you to Galilee, where you will see him as he told you."' [8] And they fled out of the tomb, for they were all trembling and bewildered; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid to.**

The women could not even start to go to the tomb until the sun was risen, because they could neither buy nor carry their spices till the Sabbath was ended by the sunrise. Mark takes due account of that fact, but perhaps his phrase, 'very early in the morning,' has led the other Evangelists astray. Matthew says that they went to the tomb 'late on the Sabbath day, when it began to dawn'; Luke says it was 'at early dawn'; and John, that 'it was yet dark.'

According to Mark, it was broad daylight by the time the women reached the tomb. Not a time for seeing ghosts, and they saw none. They saw instead what they must have taken to be an angel—'a youth clad in a white robe.' It was a numinous experience, which not only amazed them, but caused trembling and fear. But apart from this vision, they saw a sight which by itself might well have amazed them. The tomb was empty! To be precise, we must confess that Mark neither says nor implies quite so much as that. It was only 'the place' where they had laid Jesus that was found empty. To *that* the youth pointed. Only St. John makes the statement that this was a tomb where no previous burials had been made. But with this understanding we can use the familiar phrase. It is convenient—and significant. The discovery of the empty tomb (or *loculus*) at an early hour on Sunday morning is the most definite indication we have of the duration covered by the 'three days.' It is a strange fatality that the favourite Gospel of the Liberals should conclude with the empty tomb. Not with visions which might prove the immortality of the soul, but with an empty tomb, which can denote nothing but the resurrection of the dead.

But all the Gospels tell about the empty tomb, though they go on to recount various visions of the risen Lord. It is commonly believed that St. Mark's Gospel was not

an exception, that originally it, too, contained an account of Jesus' appearances to his disciples. It is well known that the familiar conclusion of this Gospel is spurious. The genuine text ends with verse 8. It is possible that St. Mark wrote no more and intended to conclude with the empty tomb. That does not, of course, imply the possibility of Mark's ignorance of such visions as the later Evangelists describe, for without the witness of Jesus to his own Resurrection there would have been no Church, and long anterior to Mark's Gospel was St. Paul's brief list of the appearances (1 Cor. $15^{3-8}$). Eduard Meyer suggests that Mark had a distaste for the uncanny and shrank from describing ghostly appearances in a document which was meant not only for Christian initiates but for a wider public. The suggestion is attractive because it kills two birds with one stone being designed to explain also why, at the beginning of his Gospel, St. Mark omits the story of the temptation in the wilderness. But we can hardly think that Mark had a distaste for the uncanny when he deals so frequently with stories of demoniacal possession, tells about Jesus' ghostly appearance as he was seen walking on the water, and describes the numinous appearance of Jesus and Moses and Elijah on the mountain of the Transfiguration. And the story of the empty tomb is not told dryly. The youth clad in a white robe, though he is soberly described in comparison with Matthew's prodigious account of the earthquake and the angel of the Lord whose appearance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow, is more uncanny than any of the appearances of the risen Christ. Moreover, the speech of the ' youth ' to the women seems meant to prepare us for an appearance of Christ to the disciples in Galilee, and more particularly to Peter.

In spite of the prominence accorded to Peter in this Gospel, we are surprised to find here an expression which singles him out so strangely among the disciples that it seems rather to contrast him with them: ' Go tell the disciples and Peter.' This suggests that Peter himself was the original narrator of this story, for if he was the speaker, it would not be strange for him to say that the injunction was to tell the disciples and *me*. We have good reason to

believe that Peter was the first to have a vision of the risen Lord ; for Cephas stands first in the earliest written record we have, that, namely, which St. Paul delivers to the Corinthian Church, declaring that he had it by oral tradition from the earliest disciples : ' That he has been raised the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve, then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once (of whom the greater part remain unto this day, but some are fallen asleep), then he appeared to James, then to all the Apostles, and last of all, as to one born out of due time, he appeared also to me.'

That is ' the Gospel ' according to St. Paul, and it is historically the most trustworthy Gospel. It is disconcerting to observe that none of our other Gospels agree with it, even in the matter of according to Peter the first vision of the Lord. St. John grudgingly allows that he was the first to *enter* the tomb, but Mary Magdalene had the first vision—which, according to St. Matthew, she shared with ' the other Mary.' According to St. Luke, the first appearance was granted to two unnamed disciples on the way to Emmaus.

We may suppose that the original conclusion of St. Mark agreed better with St. Paul, for the present abrupt ending seems designed to prepare us for an appearance to Peter—not in Jerusalem, but in Galilee. This reference to Galilee is the more emphatic because it is a repetition of Jesus' promise in $14^{28}$. It is necessary to suppose that the original conclusion of this Gospel recounted first of all, if not alone, an appearance of Jesus to the disciples in Galilee, in some way which distinguished Peter especially. I have already remarked (p. 527) how appropriate to this place is the tradition which underlies Jn $21^{1-19}$. That seems to be an appendix to St. John's Gospel which did not belong to the first draft. Beside this there is no other account in our Gospels of an appearance of Jesus in Galilee except the vague sketch with which St. Matthew concludes his story. Apart from the concordant testimony of the former Gospels to the discovery of the empty tomb, there is no point upon which their stories of the Resurrection so completely agree as in affirming that the *first* appearances of the Lord were

in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood. St. Mark is so consistent with himself that we dare not credit him with the solecism of representing that all the Apostles had fled (were therefore no longer in Jerusalem to witness the Crucifixion and to bury their teacher) and yet were in Jerusalem on the day of the Resurrection. The other Evangelists are not so consistent—except, of course, St. John, who arranges the story to suit himself. Matthew is not plausible in representing that the disciples departed from Jerusalem only at the Lord's command through the women, and in order to meet him in Galilee ; for he had already reported Mark's statement that ' they all deserted him and fled.' Though Luke omits this statement, he makes the Apostles conspicuous by their absence. We are obliged to think that the Apostles, having fled to Galilee in complete disillusionment, would never again have returned to Jerusalem, if Jesus had not met them and turned them back.

It is not easy to imagine how the original conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel might have been lost by accident. That would imply that only one copy was then in existence, and that no one retained in memory his account of the Resurrection. It is easier to suppose that it was deliberately rejected because it was discordant with the other Gospels. We must remember that until very recent times St. Mark's Gospel was very much less highly regarded than Matthew, Luke, or John. If, therefore, the conclusion of this Gospel differed from the others in so cardinal a point as the placing of the *first* appearance of the Lord in *Galilee*, we have no great reason to wonder that it did not survive.

The story of ' the days of his flesh ' fitly concludes with the Resurrection. But the *Gospel* goes on for ever, and St. Luke was happily inspired when he prolonged his story to include Christ's manifestation in the Church. One of the second-century attempts to complete St. Mark's Gospel expresses with admirable brevity the same great thought : ' But they gave Peter and his companions a brief account of all that had been enjoined. And after that, Jesus himself sent out by means of them from east to west the sacred and imperishable message of eternal salvation.'

## SYNOPSIS

## OF MATTHEW'S AND LUKE'S CORRESPONDENCES WITH MARK

FOLLOWED BY

## THREE INDEXES:

I. CROSS REFERENCES TO ST. MARK;
II. ALL OTHER BIBLICAL PASSAGES CONSIDERED;
III. NAMES AND SUBJECTS.

THE best index to this book is the Table of Contents which precedes the text: it can be used in conjunction with the Analysis of St. Mark's Gospel, with which the volume begins. What is here furnished is merely supplementary. Perhaps no part of it will prove so useful as the Synopsis. Only the *cross references* to St. Mark are given here, no mention being made of the places where the text is commented upon in the proper order. The references also to St. Matthew and St. Luke do not include the passages which are parallel to the text which is expressly studied. The Subject Index will be found no more perfect than such things usually are. But it is short, dealing only with important subjects and referring only to the pages where something significant is said.

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*Printed in England at* THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
SPOTTISWOODE, BALLANTYNE & CO. LTD.
*Colchester, London & Eton*